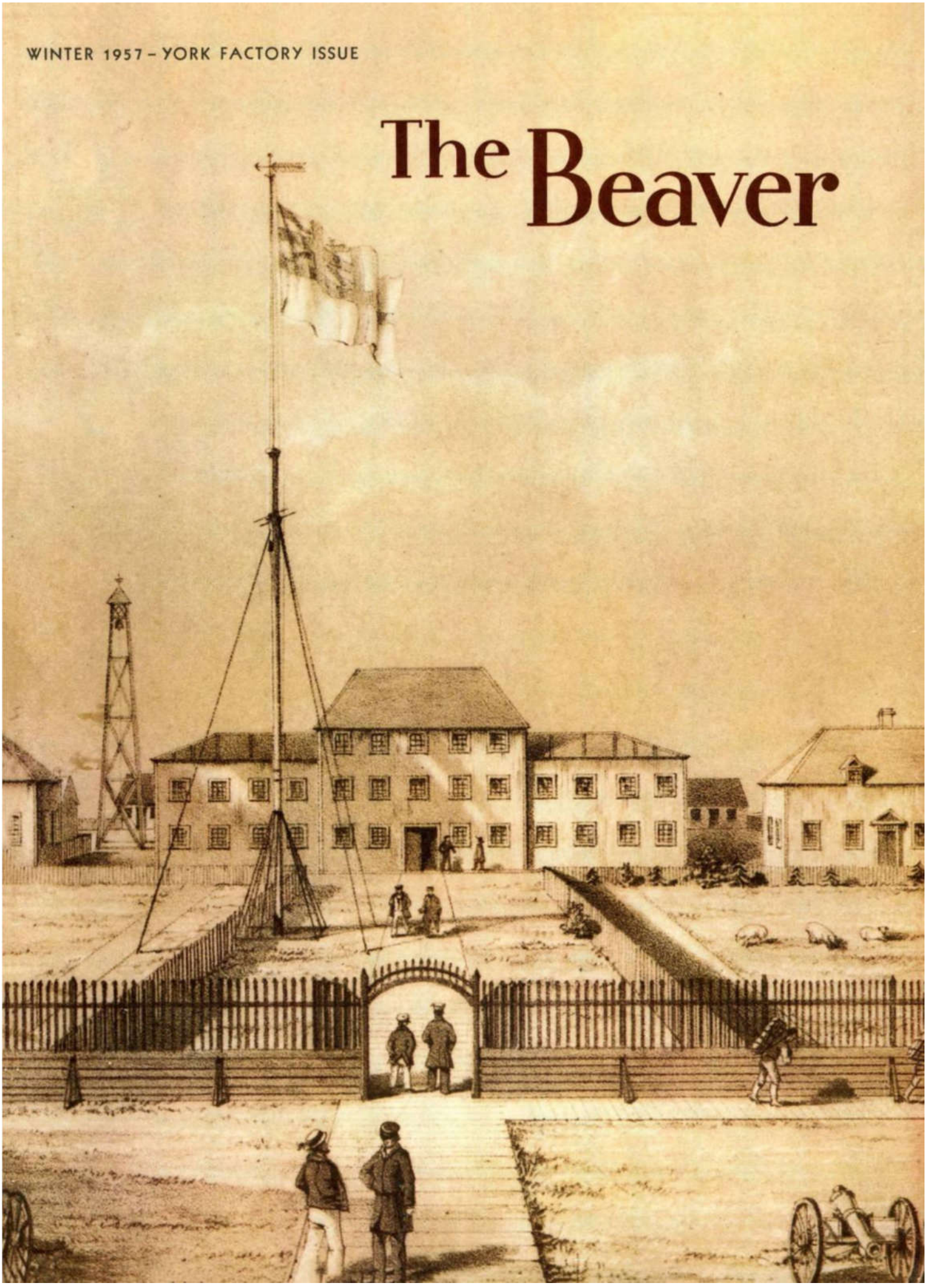
WINTER 1957 – YORK FACTORY ISSUE

The Beaver



The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

Clifford Wilson, Editor

WINTER 1957
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An Introduction

York Factory Issue

THIS summer the historic fur post of York Factory, on the west coast of Hudson Bay, was closed after two hundred and seventy-five years of trading with the Indians. Such continuity of endeavour in one spot is rare in a young country like Canada; and as York Fort was for so long the most important settlement in the North and West, it is fitting that the *Beaver* should devote a whole issue to its history.

York was the great coastal depot of the fur trade —the heart which pumped the life blood of exploration and commerce throughout the network of trade routes spread across the western wilderness. It was the place where all the trade goods for this immense area were received by sea from Britain and repacked for inland distribution; and where all the furs bartered for those goods were collected and stowed on board the Company's transatlantic ships, bound for the markets of the Old World. It was also the first of many "Gateways to the West"—the spot where the twin rivers, Nelson and Hayes, that led the canoeist to Lake Winnipeg and on into the far west, joined their waters with the sea. And because of this, it was early recognized by both British and French as the logical place for the headquarters of the North American fur trade.

The number of famous and lesser-known northern men who lived at, or passed through, York Factory, is legion. Great explorers like Kelsey, Henday, Thompson, Franklin, Richardson, and Rae, set out from there on historic expeditions. And in later times famous northern travellers like Bell and Tyrrell stayed there. Governor George Simpson started from there on his two record-breaking transcontinental trips of 1824 and 1828. And under his determined chairmanship the Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land, governing body of the greater part of what is now Canada, met there on several occasions.

Here in this issue you will find the life of York Factory dealt with under several headings, and in every case except the last the period covered is that of 1682 to 1900. The collecting of notes and illustrations and the writing of the articles has entailed a great deal of research, mainly on the part of the Archives staff of the Hudson's Bay Company in London. For although odd facets of York's history have been dealt with in various books and articles, nothing comprehensive has ever been attempted until now.

Yet this can be no more than an outline of York's long story. The little human details that breathe life into a tale have been barely touched upon. Readers will find them in such books as *James Isham's Observations* (1949), the *Letters of Letitia Hargrave* (1947), and R. M. Ballantyne's *Hudson's Bay* (1848 *et seq.*). But not until a full-scale book is published, written by a sympathetic historian who has steeped himself in the records and in the period, will the long and romantic history of York Fort come alive upon the printed page.

Forts on the Twin

BECAUSE the Nelson and Hayes Rivers formed the chief highways from Hudson Bay into the unknown west, the place where they emptied into the sea was a favourite spot for fur trade forts. Ships carrying trade goods from England and France could anchor there, and their cargoes could be stored in the forts to await the arrival of Indian canoe brigades coming downstream from the fur country of the interior. Then the furs the natives brought could be loaded on the ships and taken across the Atlantic. With the Indians doing all the work of trapping and skinning the animals, bringing down the furs, and taking back the trade goods, it was an ideal arrangement from the traders' point of view.

Four weeks after the Hudson's Bay Company was incorporated, the Adventurers sent out the pink *Wivenhoe* to trade on Hudson Bay. On board were Radisson and the Company's first North American governor, Charles Bayly. They steered for the mouth of the Nelson River where they planned to erect a settlement that should be the Company's chief factory*, and on arrival there went ashore and took possession of the region for King Charles, "and in tocken thereof, nayled up the Kings Armes in Brasse on a Small Tree." But although they found an Indian wigwam there, in which they spent the night, no natives were seen, and the *Wivenhoe* was soon driven out to sea by a storm. Therefore, although wood and game and berries were plentiful, they decided to sail for Charles Fort in James Bay, where their companion ship *Prince Rupert* lay at anchor.

But as Grace Lee Nute says in her *Caesars of the Wilderness*, "With that keen insight which always characterized him, Radisson saw at the outset of his career that Port Nelson was the key to the fur trade of inland North America." He soon left the service of the Company and returned to that of France, and twelve years after the Company's abortive attempt to found a factory there, he returned to that vicinity with Groseilliers and built the first fort on the Hayes River, not far from where York Factory later stood.

Radisson was by no means alone in his convictions, for in that year and the two following, no less than seven posts were built at the mouths of the twin rivers.

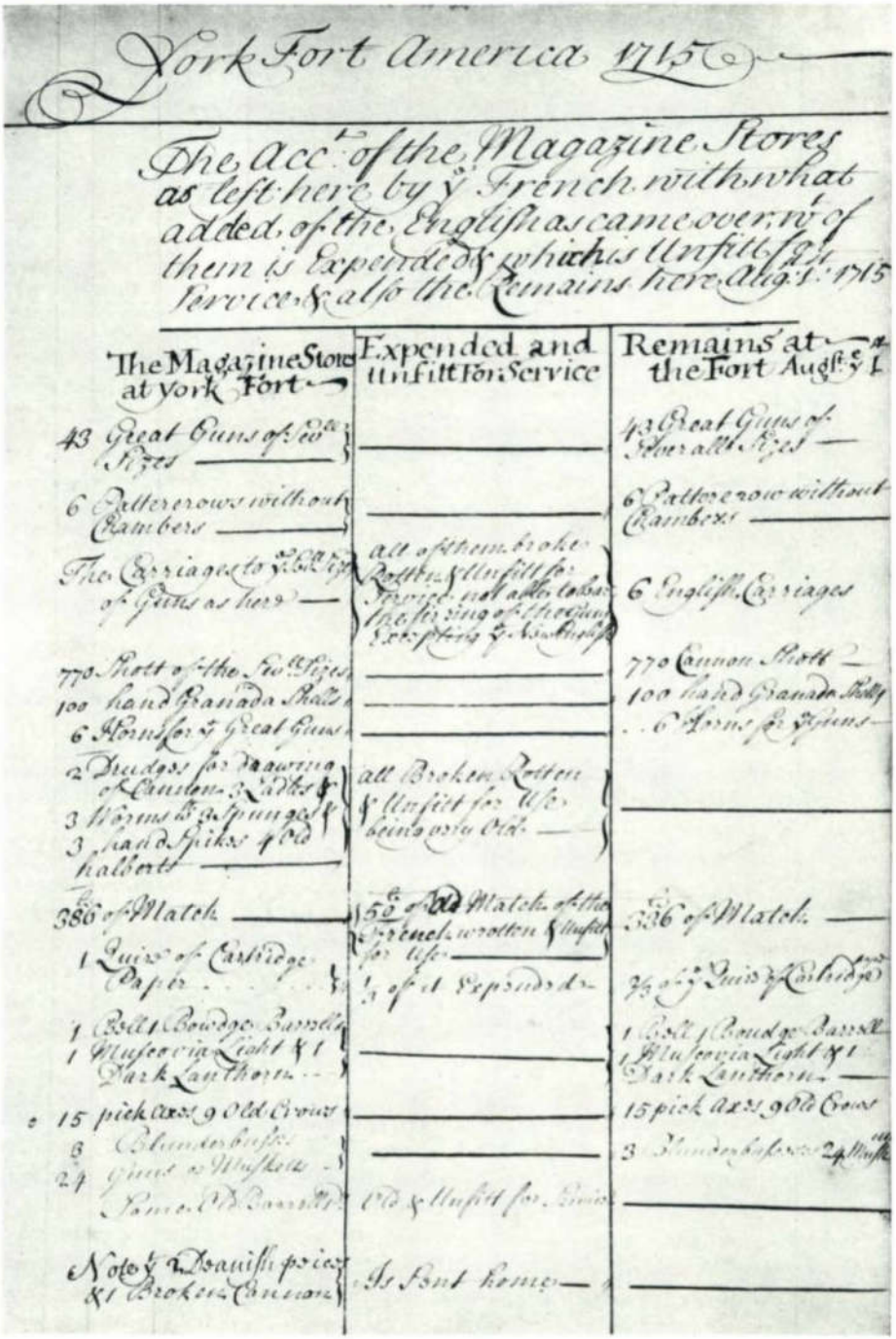
Three of these were built by the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1681 the Governor and Committee had affirmed that "we judge none [of our instructions] of greater moment then the speedy settlement of Port Nelson." And the next year they sent out Governor Bridgar in the *Prince Rupert* to start a factory there.

That frigate, commanded by Capt. Zachariah Gillam of *Nonsuch* fame, did not arrive in the Nelson until September 18, by which time Groseilliers and Radisson had already established themselves on the south bank of the Hayes River some 15 miles from its mouth. The ensuing struggle for York Factory is described in this issue by Dr. Nute. The appearance of York Factory in 1697, when it was captured by d'Iberville for the second time, is given in some detail by La Potherie. Briefly, he says it was in the form of a trapezium flanked by three and a half bastions, and armed with two brass mortars, thirty-four cannon, seven small pieces, and several swivel guns.

*The word factory here does not mean a place where things are made, but the residence of an agent or factor.

Rivers

BY CLIFFORD WILSON


York Fort America 1715

The Acct of the Magazine Stores as left here by ye French with what added of the English as came over w^ch of them is Expended & which is Unfitt for Service & also the Remains here Augst 1715

The Magazine Stores at York Fort	Expended and Unfitt for Service	Remains at the Fort Augst 1715
43 Great Guns of 2 Sizes		43 Great Guns of 2 sizes
6 Patterero's without Chambers		6 Patteroes without Chambers
The Carriages to ye above Sort of Guns as here	all of them broke & Unfitt for Service not able to take the Peices off the Guns Except 6 English	6 English Carriages
770 Shott of the 2 Sizes		770 Cannon Shott
100 hand Granada Shells		100 hand Granada Shells
6 Horns for ye Great Guns		6 Horns for ye Guns
2 Dredges for Scouring of Cannon 3 Ladles & 3 Worms w^th a Spunge & 3 Hand Spikes & Old Halbert	all Broken Rotten & Unfitt for Use being very Old	
386 of Match	50 of Old Match of the French wrotten & Unfitt for Use	336 of Match
1 Quire of Cartridge Paper	½ of it Expended	½ of ye Quire of Cartridge Paper
1 Bell 1 Bowdge Barrell 1 Muscovia Light & 1 Dark Lanthorn		1 Bell 1 Bowdge Barrell 1 Muscovia Light & 1 Dark Lanthorn
15 pick Axes 9 Old Ones		15 pick Axes 9 Old Ones
3 Blunderbusses 24 Guns & Muskets		3 Blunderbusses 24 Muskets
Some Old Barrells	Old & Unfitt for Use	
Note ye 2 Deanish peices & 1 Broken Carriage	Is Sent home	

Page from the York Fort account book of 1715 listing armaments left by the French and brought over by the English. The "2 Deanish peices" were from Munk's camp at Churchill, and were still at York in 1716.

For the next seventeen years the fort remained in possession of the French; but the Treaty of Utrecht restored all posts on Hudson Bay to the Company, and in 1714 Capt. James Knight as governor on the Bay and Henry Kelsey as Deputy-Governor, armed with a commission from Queen Anne, took possession of York Factory.

They found it in an appalling state. Knight reported "... the Place as wee are come to is nothing but a Confusd. heap of old rotten Houses without form or Strength nay not Sufficient to Secure Your Goods from the Weather not fitt for Men to live in without being Exposd. to the Frigid Winter my Own Place I have to live in this Winter is not half so Good as our Cowhouse was in the Bottom of the Bay & I have never been able to See my hand in it Since I have been here without a Candle it is so black & Dark Cold & Whett with all nothing to make it better but heaping up Earth abt. it to make it Warm . . ."

It would be impossible, he said, to repair the fort, and the only thing to do was to build a new one about half-a-mile downstream. "I design next Summer God Willing

to Gett Timber & all things ready in Order for Doing it against the Carpenters comes over." Later, "the best place to lye our Goods was out of the Doors for there it was dry over head wn. done raineing but in the houses wee had the Drapping of them for Some hours After."

A month later, on October 20, he had made some progress: "I had a beddstidd put up for me to lye on I haveing laid on the Ground twill Now."

Knight and his men had to stay in that miserable place all winter. Not until October 1715 were they able to move into the new house which he described as "the best Lodging as ever Man had in this Country."

Next year they put another storey on the house in which to store dry goods and skins—"36 foot square wth. a Crane to hoist Goods up by." And they put up "Pallisados" all round it. To increase their armaments they set up "two Outlandish [foreign] peices formerly brought from Churchill River." These were presumably the "2 Deanish peices" referred to in an earlier list of magazine stores, which had been left by Jens Munk nearly a century before at the mouth of the Churchill.

Knight soon went north to build a post there, and left Henry Kelsey in charge of York. A report that Kelsey sent him shows that in 1718 they were still adding to the fort and mentions two guns in each flanker (bastion), a cookroom, smithy, trading room, powder room (18th century type) and 300 boards and planks which they had whipsawed the previous winter. In July he says he has "fetcht a Raft of 45 peices Timber 100 planck & 300 Stakes for the Trench from the upper Wooding place," which appears to have been at least twenty miles upstream.

James Isham, who has left us extremely interesting accounts of life at York and Churchill in the 1730s and '40s, intended to describe York Factory in his *Observations on Hudson's Bay* (*HBRS XII*). But unfortunately two-and-a-half blank pages of his manuscript follow the heading, "A discription of York Fort Hay's River Vizt." After that comes a paragraph beginning "The Wall's of our housses we here Live in are 2 foot thick of Stone . . ." which obviously refers to Prince of Wales's Fort at Churchill where he was writing at the time. However, other contemporary accounts are to be found in four books written in the 1740s by Arthur Dobbs, Joseph Robson, Henry Ellis, and the Clerk of the *California*.

Robson, who was first sent out as a stone mason to Prince of Wales's Fort arrived at York Factory in 1745, and after inspecting the log construction told the governor of the fort that the foundations ought to be of brick or stone. His criticisms were not welcomed—though the marshy ground in that vicinity has always been one of the great problems in the preservation of the buildings.

> York Fort [he wrote] stands above high-water-mark, about eighty yards from Hayes's-river, and four miles from the sea. It is built with logs of white fir eight or nine inches square, which are laid one upon another. In the summer the water beats between the logs, keeping the timber continually damp; and in the winter the white frost gets through, which being thawed by the heat of the stoves, has the same effect: so that with the water above and the damp below, the timber both of the foundation and super-structure rots so fast, that in twenty-five or thirty years the whole fort must be rebuilt with fresh timber, which with the great quantity used for firing, will occasion a scarcity there in a few years.
>
> It has four bastions, but not fit for cannon: the distance between the salient angle of each bastion is ninety feet. On each curtain there are three pateraroes, or swivel-guns, and loop-holes for small arms; it is also surrounded by two rows of pallisadoes, some three inches thick, and the largest seven inches; but there is no ditch. The wall is of wood, eight or nine inches thick. The magazine is in the west bastion; its wall is of the same thickness as the fort-wall, its floor is raised two feet and a half or three feet above the level of the fort, and its sides are lined with slit-deal plaistered. Upon the banks of the river are planted two batteries from twelve to six pounders, one of four guns, the other of ten. A guard of thirty men was kept in the fort during the late war. . . .

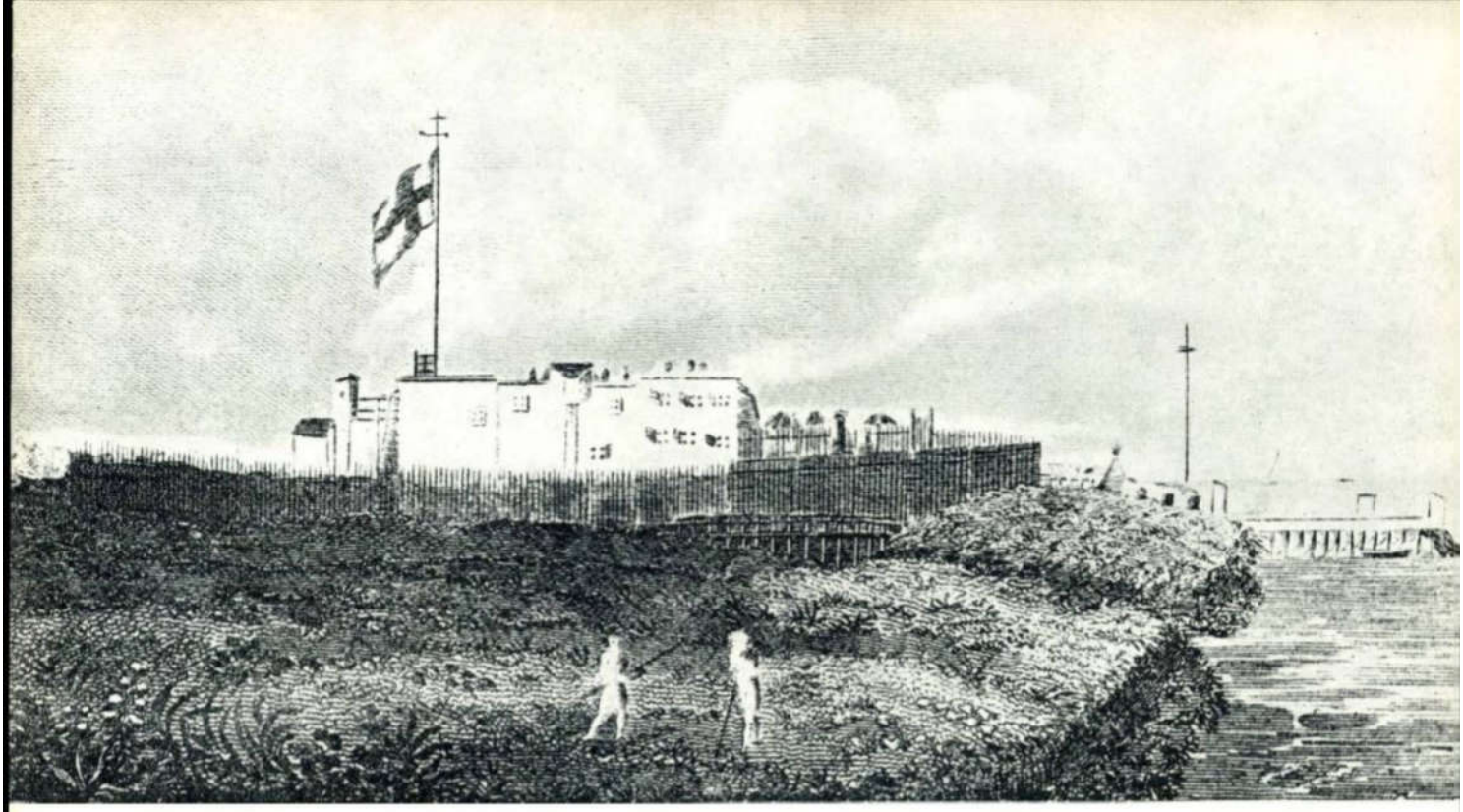
The plan in his book shows a creek flowing through the outer palisade, at the back and on the upstream side, and around the inner palisade—a feature which is found in at least two other plans, and which serves to show where the fort stood from 1715 to 1792.

Ellis in his *Voyage to Hudson's Bay* (1748) remarks that the fort undoubtedly appears formidable to the Indians, but though it "is looked upon to be in all Respects the most valuable of all the Hudson's-Bay Company's Settlements" it is utterly incapable of being defended from attack by a European enemy.

Robson had pointed out that with only logs for foundations, the buildings had to be repaired every 25 or 30 years. Ferdinand Jacobs, who was in charge in 1763, reported that the place was certainly decaying, and the Governor and Committee replied with instructions to bring stone from Churchill to rebuild the fort. But this was not done. In 1778 the newly appointed surveyor of the Company, Philip Turnor, made an examination of the fort, and the plan he made is still preserved in the Company's archives. He saw not the least necessity for rebuilding, but he did think it advisable to repair the men's flanker—that is, the bastion housing the staff—and it was rebuilt to accommodate 42 instead of 28 as formerly.

The roomier accommodation was not enjoyed for long. In 1782 the Comte de la Pérouse with three ships, fresh from the sacking of the great stone fort on the Churchill, anchored off the Point of Marsh between the two rivers and sent ashore by way of the Nelson a party of 250 men to attack the Factory, which they captured and burned.*

*This was one hundred years almost to the day after Radisson and Groseilliers entered the Hayes River to build the first post there in opposition to the English.



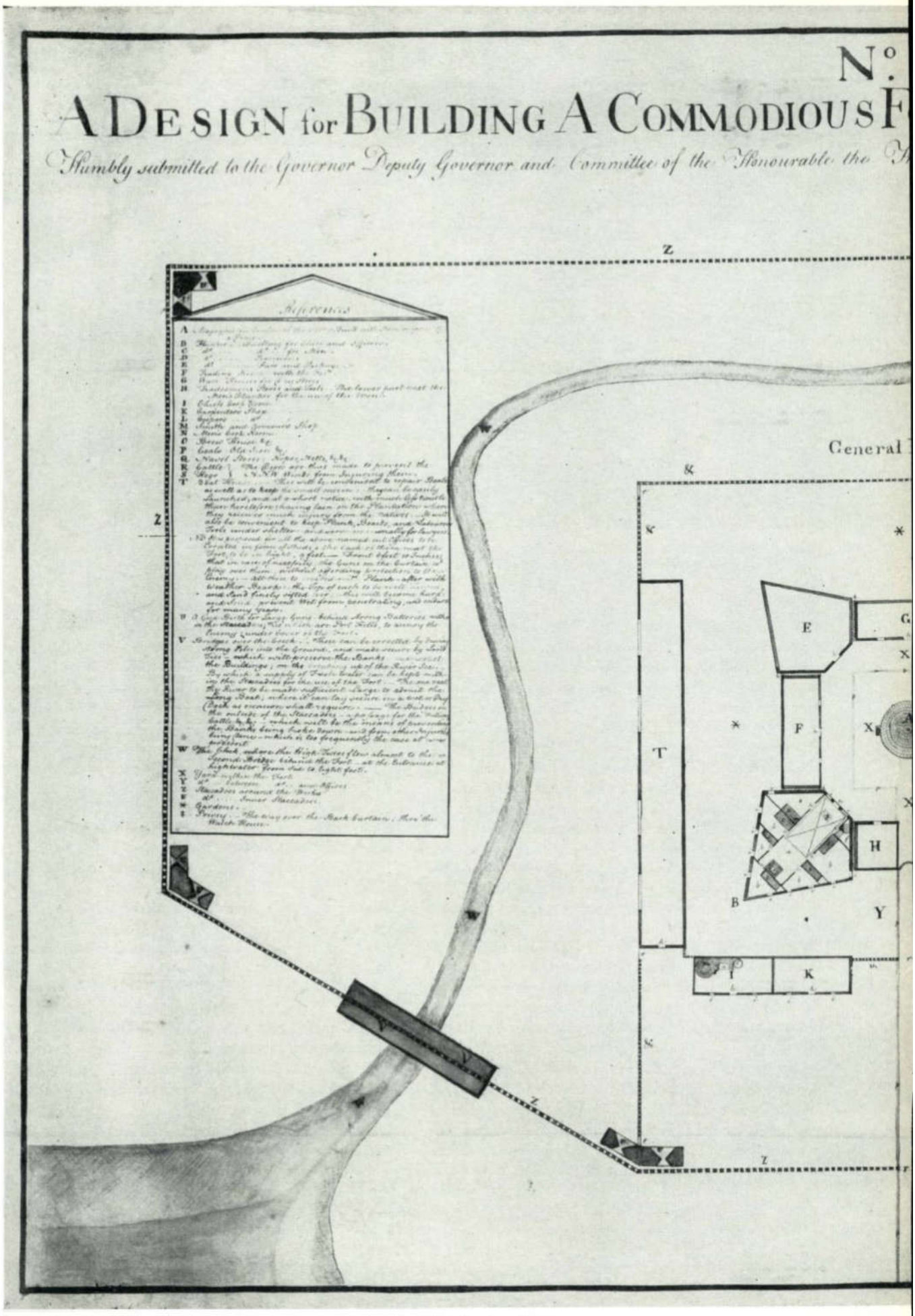
Though this picture was described in the "European Magazine" for June 1797 as Prince of Wales's Fort, it evidently depicts York Factory. The creek and the bridge over it alongside the palisade can be seen in the plan on the next page.

The following summer Humphrey Marten, who had surrendered the fort and been returned to England, was sent back to rebuild it, and a prefabricated house was sent with him to shelter the cargo of trade goods. Although the ground where the old fort stood suffered great damage from the break-up of 1785, Marten's successor Joseph Colen wrote in August next year: "No time shall be lost in the errection of a new Factory on the Foundation of the old one & intend to begin on the Eastern Flanker, on account of its good Cellar, and making conveniences for the men; which I hope to have compleated before the arrival of the Ship next Season."

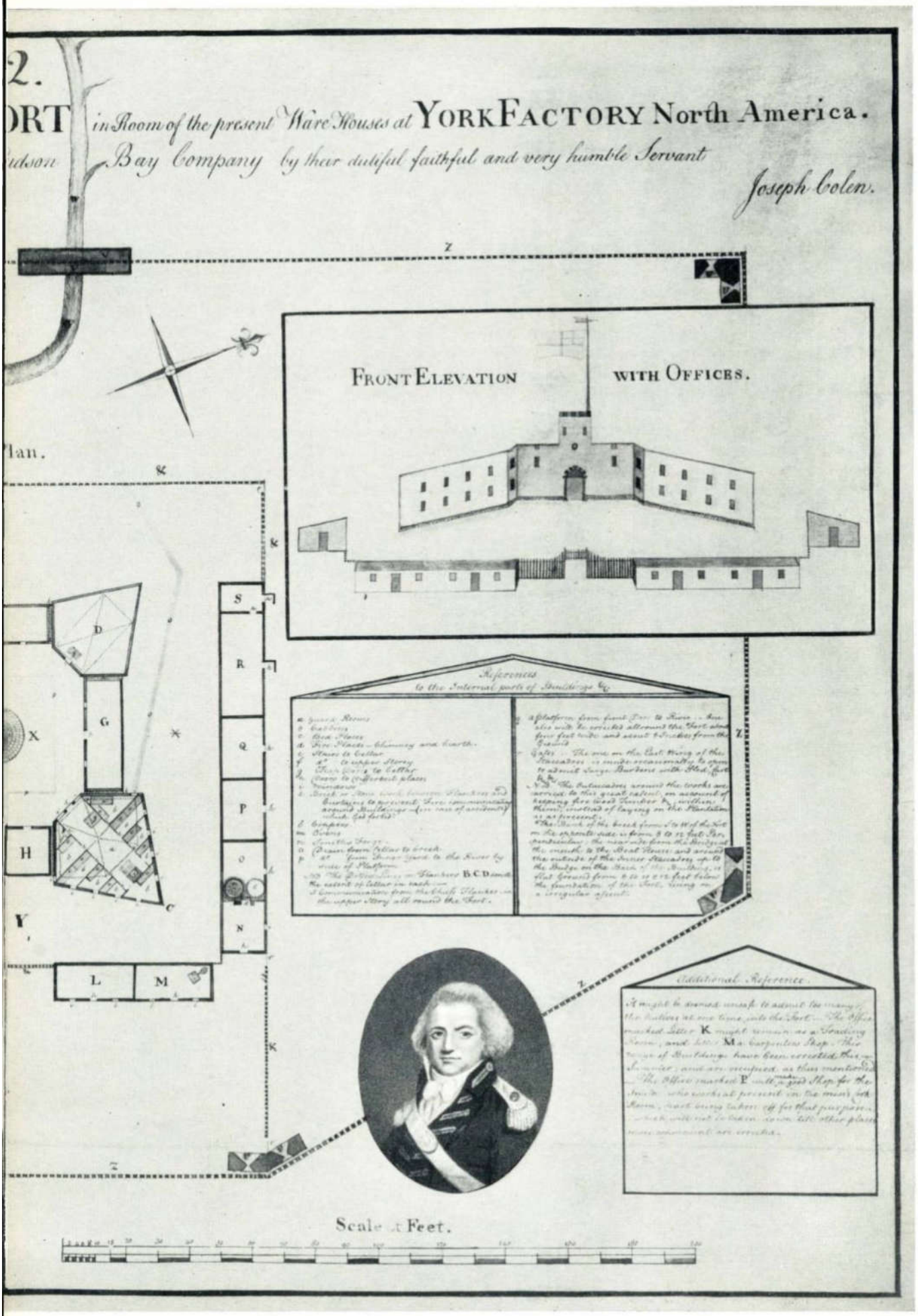
London had given orders that the new fort should be built in the form of a square house with four flankers, but Colen pointed out that "The *Magazine* remains entire that was in the inner Court of the Old Fort, if a square House is built *that* must be pulled down, on the contrary, if with Sheds nearly after the same plan of the Old One destroyed." The Governor and Committee retorted in 1787 that "A square House with four Flankers is more easily defended more roomy & takes less wood and spikes than a Fort with Sheds, for which Reasons we give the preference to the Square House." But in spite of this, Colen, with an ocean between, went ahead with his own plans. He sent to the London office an elaborate plan, reproduced herewith, utilizing the old powder magazine in the centre, and explained that "For the Flanker D and E—with all the Curtains FG. GH. are intended to be built in frame work, without any other addition than that of Bricknoggen [brickwork in timber frame] and rough cast outside—this will be equally lasting and strong, as the flankers B. & C. which are to be built with Logs for warmth—between each Curtain and flanker—a stone or Brick wale will be built to prevent fire communicating in case of accident. . . . The Square House can be added after the flankers are built."

Next spring the Hayes rose 32½ feet and the damage done by the ice was so severe that Colen was forced to choose an entirely new location for the fort. This was about a mile farther up the river, on ground which had stood nearly four feet above the highest point of the flood. The buildings he had erected up to that time were "so constructed and bolted together that they can be removed at pleasure with only the trouble of taking down & putting up again—the Men's flanker excepted which is built with logs." And this was evidently the spot occupied from then on by York Factory.

Colen intended to build the foundations of the new fort of stone, "being more lasting than that of Brick in this Cold Climate," and in August of 1788 the council at the factory reported that one flanker was already erected while the others were well advanced; but Colen explained that he was more concerned with housing his goods and providing proper accommodations for trade than with anything else. However, over a year later he could only express the hope that "by next Season we shall be so forward as to remove to the new Plantation;" and even as



One of Joseph Colen's plans for a new fort sent to London in 1787 and referred to on page seven.


2.
ORT in Room of the present Ware Houses at YORK FACTORY North America.
udson Bay Company by their dutiful faithful and very humble Servant
Joseph Colen.
Plan.
FRONT ELEVATION WITH OFFICES.
References to the Internal parts of Buildings &c.
Additional Reference.
Scale 1 Feet.

Inset is a portrait of Colen wearing his Company uniform with H B C on the epaulettes and the coat-of-arms on the baldric.

late as the spring of 1792 the work was so little advanced that he had to move his lodgings from the old site up to "New York" in order to keep his eye on the laggard carpenters. Yet only six years later John Ballenden complained that "the Whole Building is a mere Shell and more calculated for Show than anything else. . . . The Cellars within the Factory must be pumped every two or three days."

What happened after that is a little difficult to determine. Colin Robertson, who visited the fort in 1816, says that it is built in the form of an octagon, inside a square of palisades 18 feet high, and that there are no bastions.

"Between the Stockades and Octagan are a few scattered houses for the men employed about the Fort. The Governor's abode, Officers' rooms, (or Cabins as they term them) and the Warehouses are all under one roof, and these buildings are of wood, and the rooms warmed by the means of stoves, so dangerously constructed by the pipes running through the roof, that it is astonishing to me no accident has happened by fire . . . From Mr. Bun's office you crawl up to the Stores by means of an ill made ladder, and such is the form that the different apartments are thrown into, that you must visit four or five rooms before you find the article that is wanted."

Capt. (later Sir) John Franklin who landed there in 1819 on the first of his three arctic expeditions explains that the buildings are two storeys high and placed in the form of a square, with an octagonal court in the centre (which is probably what the others meant when they said the building was octagonal) the whole surrounded by a 20-foot stockade.

Nicholas Garry, who was there in 1821, just after the union of the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies, also says the building is in the form of an octagon "which appear to have been so erected to form Bastions but are now converted into dwelling Rooms and Warehouses. The Roof which forms a Sort of Walk or Look out is covered with Lead on which there is a Flag Staff, rigged as a Mast. In the Centre of the Building is the Hudson Bay Arms painted by Mr. Cooke. Within the Stockade are several Buildings, a small Garden and the Powder Magazine which is a Wooden erection covered with Lead. It is in a most dangerous Situation and should be removed."

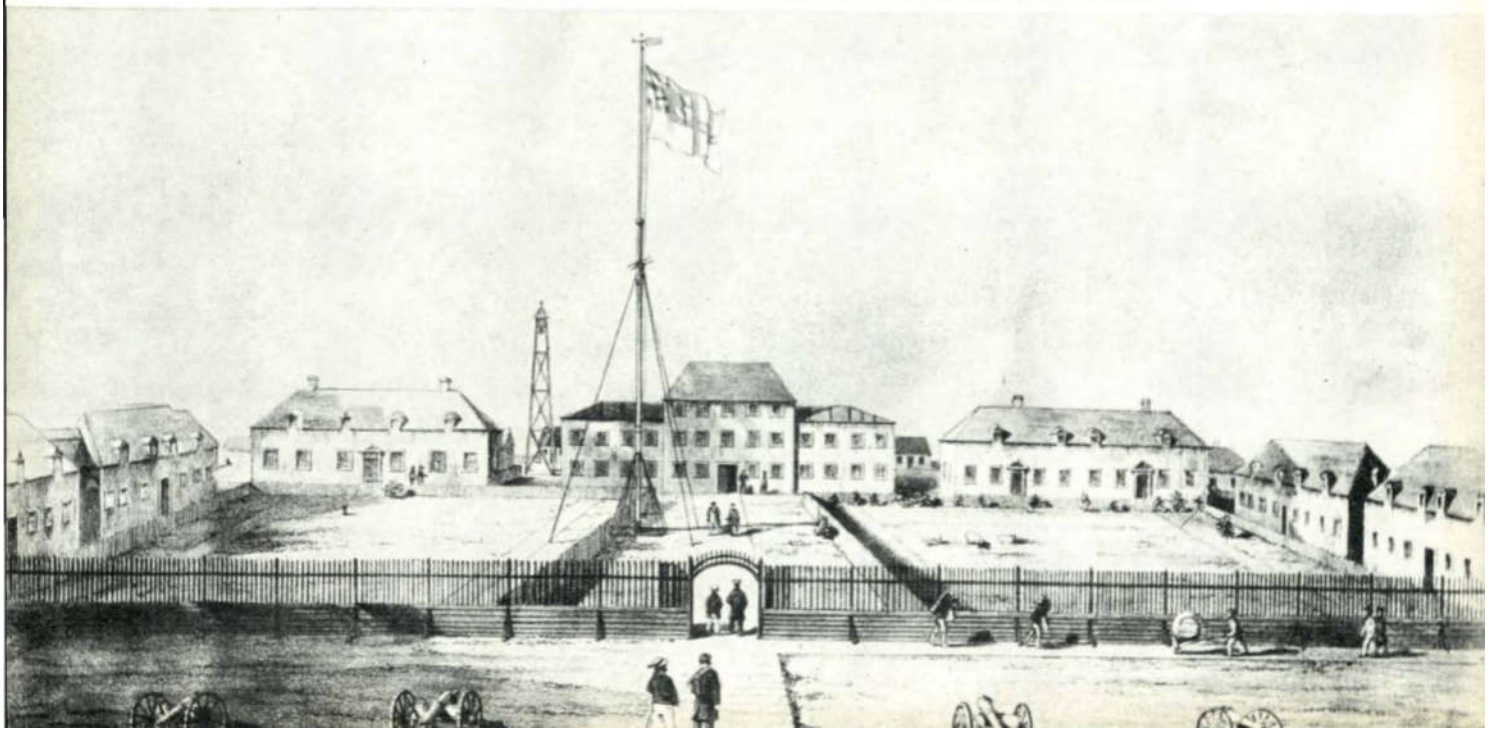
John McLean in his *Notes of a Twenty-five Years' Service* says that the buildings at that time were of the most wretched description—"the apartments had more the appearance of cells for criminals, than of rooms for gentlemen."

In July next year (1822) the Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land meeting at York directed that Chief Factor John George McTavish, ex-Nor'wester, but then in charge of the factory, should build two new stores "to correspond with those erected last year;* also a Powder Magazine and winter dwelling houses."

The year Governor Simpson was married (1830) he brought his bride over to Canada and took her up to York via the Great Lakes and Red River (*Beaver* Dec. '53, Mar. and June '54). Like Garry she describes the Old Factory as an octagon building with the Company's arms over the gateway, and adds that in the shops one could buy groceries, haberdashery, ironmongery, cutlery, medicines, and even perfumery, at prices "lower than the same articles could be had at, in any retail shop in London."

*The last of the 1821 buildings was torn down in 1847.

York Factory at the zenith of its influence, in 1853. From a lithograph supposed to have been done from a sketch made by Chief Trader Alexander Hunter Murray. Of all these buildings, the depot in the centre, shown on the next page, is the only one left. On the right of it is the summer mess house, and on the left the guest house.



York Factory in the 1930s, looking towards the sea. In the centre is the depot. The first York Fort was built about half a mile downstream, and the second about half a mile beyond that.

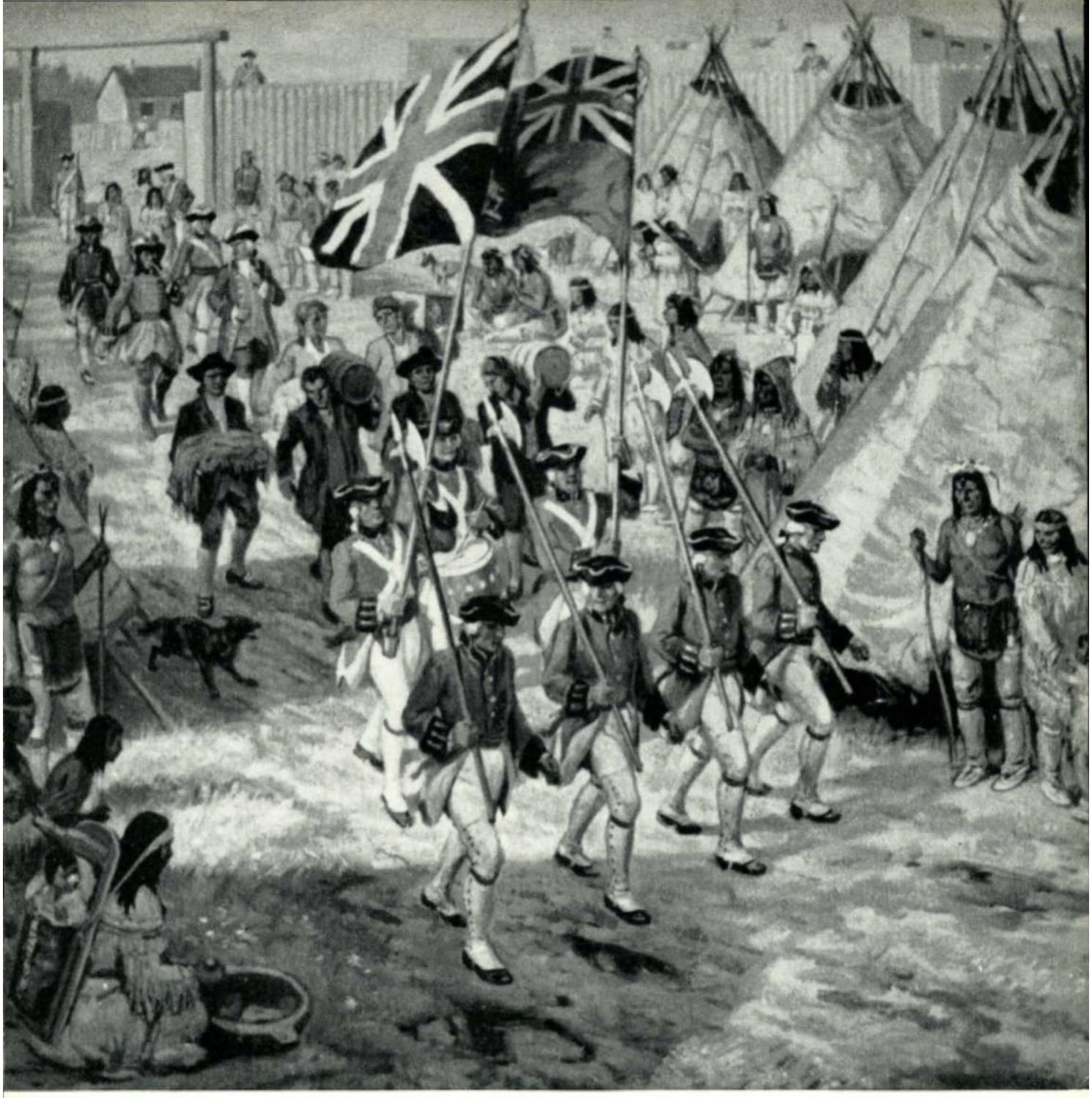
Some time within the next ten years the great depot building, which still stands, was begun. For when Frances Simpson's sister, Isobel Finlayson, came out in 1840, she found a large warehouse, three storeys high, in the centre of the factory. References to "the new store" are found in letters and journals of 1832, 1836, and 1839, any of which may refer to this building. The present depot building—last relic of York in its heyday—stands in the form of an open square, two storeys high, and the three-storey section to which Mrs. Finlayson refers forms the centre block in front. A. B. McIvor, the last in the long line of managers at York, points out that its construction differs from that of the two-storey section. That it was built farther back than the first fort there is evident from the fact that in 1935, when a drain was being dug from the depot to the river bank, two old cellars were found which probably lay beneath the buildings of Colen's "New York."

The two-storey section of the big building was seemingly erected in the late 1840s for an entry in the Journal of October 1848 mentions that the lead is being placed on the roof of the General Depot. The lead-covered part of the depot was the two-storey section, as shown by a report of 1889. The three-storey section was roofed with tin.

1840 was also the year when James Hargrave brought out his bride, Letitia, to live at the factory, and her letters from there, published by the Champlain Society under the editorship of Margaret Arnett MacLeod, form the chief sources of our knowledge of social and domestic life there in the 19th century. "I was much surprised," she told her mother, "at the 'great swell' the Factory is. It looks beautiful. The houses are painted pale yellow. The windows and some particular parts white. Some have green gauze mosquito curtains outside and the effect is very good." The amenities had obviously come to York.

Mrs. Hargrave's description of the place agrees pretty well with those of Mrs. Finlayson, R. M. Ballantyne (1841) and Dr. J. B. Nevins (1842). They show the layout of the buildings to have been in the form of an H, with the guest house, depot, and summer mess house in the line forming the cross bar. The legs of the H were composed of four fur stores, and the arms contained the trading shop, provision store, clerks' house (Bachelors' Hall) and the house of the officer in charge—at this time James Hargrave. Various other buildings, such as a boat shed, oil store, lumber house, ice house, powder magazine, cooper's shop, and smithy, were scattered here and there.

Such was York at the height of its glory—the headquarters of the great Northern Department of Rupert's Land, the most important post of the Hudson's Bay Company in the days when its fur trade empire stretched from sea to sea, and when the Council of that Department, presided over by Sir George Simpson, was the governing body over by far the greater part of what is now the Dominion of Canada. The accompanying lithograph of 1853 depicts York Factory at the zenith of its power. Yet only five years later, that power had begun to decline, and Fort Garry on the route from St. Paul soon succeeded it as the Company's chief establishment. ◆



Trading ceremony at York Factory about 1780, described in the June 1947 "Beaver." From the painting by A. Sherriff Scott.

Trading into Hudson's Bay

BY KENNETH KIDD

Mr. Kidd is curator of ethnology at the Royal Ontario Museum, and specialises in the subject of trade goods.

AFTER 275 years of activity, York Factory closed its doors this summer of 1957. During those years, the place had been a centre of trade between Indians and whites; the former obtaining there those goods which had, in the course of time, become indispensable to them, and the latter receiving in return the rich harvest of furs produced by the immense country adjacent to the Fort on the south and west. So customary had this two-way traffic become that one might think it would have gone on forever, and feel surprise that it should cease. But change occurs in all things, and York Fort has ceased to be.

What had kept the post in business for these two and three-quarter centuries? To such a question, every school boy in Canada would quickly reply: "The trade in furs." So far as it goes, this is true; but it is only half the truth. A trade in furs implies, in the very nature of things, a two-way transaction. We can readily visualize the Indian laying his furs on the counter, but we know very well that such an act calls for a reciprocal move on the part of the trader; he is expected to give something in return. Without this two-way flow—of furs inward and goods outward—there could be no trade. Nowadays, of course, we are accustomed to a somewhat attenuated "trade," for we do not give goods in return for some other kind of goods; we hand over money for goods. But 275 years ago, money was scarce even in white settlements, and totally useless at remote posts. All trade was done on a sort of barter basis; furs were "bought" with goods.

In time, the commodities used in the purchase of furs, or in any other dealings with the natives, came to be known as "trade goods." They were the very lifeblood of business. All posts required them, not only in the Hudson's Bay Company's territories, but wherever Europeans dealt with natives. The French used them in their early post at Tadoussac; John Smith required them at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1609 and later; and the multitudinous trading posts from here to Acadia, and indeed to Oswego, Niagara, Ohio, Detroit and Michilimackinac, down through the years, depended upon them. Great quantities reached the ports of Quebec, New York and Philadelphia, as well as those in Hudson Bay, to be distributed to "pack-horse men" or canoemen, and sent off into the wilderness; there to be traded to Indians to satisfy their needs and their vanity. The production of these goods must have kept many men busy, and filled the holds of most of the ships which crossed the Atlantic; yet no accurate estimate of the value of them is available. Some students are of the opinion that the manufacture of trade goods was insignificant; but at least in the case of glass beads, it was the major activity of one great city, Venice.

The effect on the Indian was by contrast profound. For instance, where he had in the past been accustomed to hunting with a bow and arrows, he now became dependent upon firearms, either muskets or some type of gun. By their use, he was able to increase manyfold the number of pelts he could deliver and the amount of goods he could buy. Amongst the latter were metal pots and pans; and these, being more durable, quickly superseded the birch-bark dishes upon which he used to be dependent; no longer did his people have to make them, or the pottery vessels which, in more favoured regions, they had used for centuries. Manufactured clothing, and particularly woollens, soon replaced skin garments, although boots and shoes never ousted moccasins. In the realm of finery, glass beads were eagerly sought by the Indian women to decorate clothing, for they were easier to manipulate than the traditional porcupine quills, more variegated, and being new, considered on the whole more desirable.

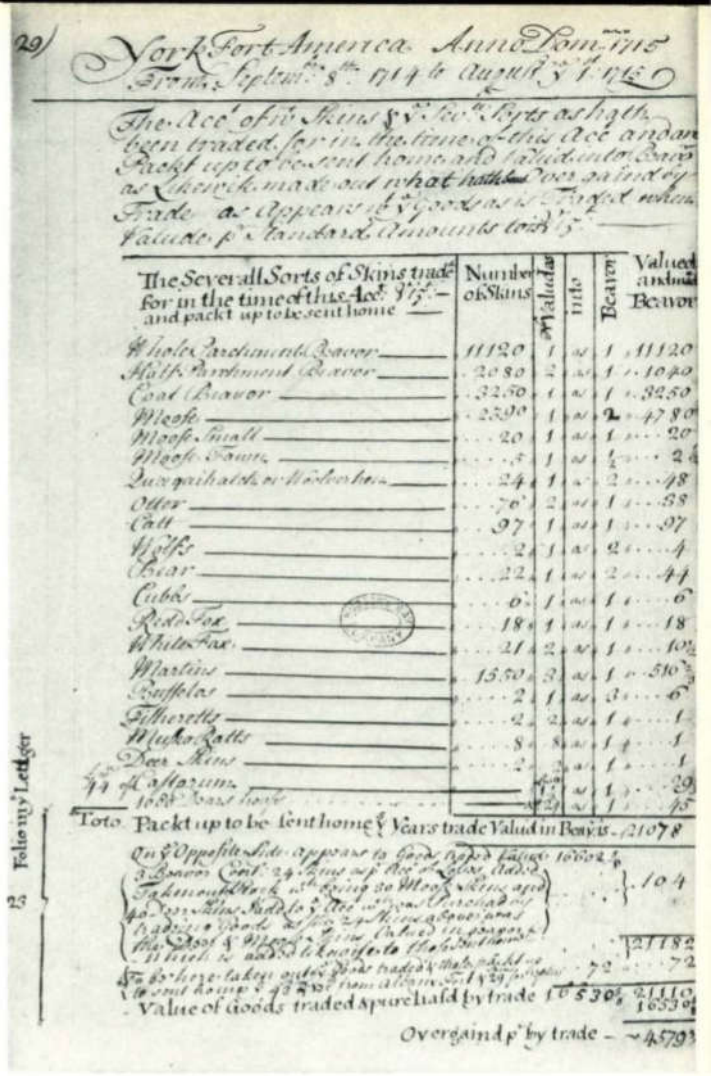
In these and a hundred other ways, trade goods affected the life of the Indian; they forced him into new channels of activity (hunting on a commercial basis); they quickened his life, for they made it necessary for him to engage in regular activity; they introduced the competitive idea; they gave him new comforts and new baubles to please his fancy; they made obsolete many of the old crafts (making arrows, stone tools, etc.), and in the long run they spelt the end of native forms of society. It is hardly an exaggeration to say, then, that the trading activity between the white man and the Indian was of little consequence to the former compared with the tremendous significance for the whole way of life of the latter. The fur trade, and the

manufacture of trade goods, made scarcely a ripple in the white man's world, but they turned the Indian's world upside down.

What were these magic goods? Were they something inherently different from what we are accustomed to? Basically, no. On the contrary, they were by comparison with most of ours, cheap and common. Most of them were simple, everyday things of humble use, like iron axes or hatchets, sugar, tobacco, knives, blankets and awl blades. Some were of no practical value whatever and were designed solely to please the fancy, like hawk bells to decorate one's garments and make a merry jingle as one walked; "lac'd hats" to add to one's magnificence; "seal" rings or plain rings for one's own or one's wife's fingers; handkerchiefs, and red leather trunks, the better to carry one's belongings.

Strangely, the two-way nature of the traffic is scarcely realized beyond the fur trader's realm. For some odd reason, the outside world visualizes only the trade in furs, forgetting that for the furs goods were handed out. Yet, of course, this was the whole basis of the Company's business. How was it conducted? Actually, there was a good deal of ceremony connected with it, as was so adequately described by Bacqueville de la Potherie in 1722, and again in an article in the *Beaver* (June, 1947). And since no money changed hands, values had to be reckoned in some other medium, and the most obvious medium was beaver. A Company statement of 1776 noted that, "Beaver being the chief Commoditye we trade for, We therefore make it the Standard whereby we value all other Furs and commodities, dealt for in Trade." The system, however, was in vogue at least a century before, for we find a "Standard of Trade" quoted by Oldmixon in 1708 and the remark that it had already been established some 25 years.

It would require more space than is available here to go into details as to the fluctuations in the values of goods as represented by the beaver skin, but a few observations may be of interest. For instance, in Oldmixon's Standard of Trade a gun was worth "One with the other 10 good Skins; that is, Winter Beaver; 12 Skins for the biggest sort, 10 for the mean, and 8 for the smallest;" in 1748, all guns, whether three, three and one-half, or four feet long, cost 14 beaver at York Fort and remained the same in 1766. A pound of shot cost half a beaver according to Oldmixon in 1708, but in 1748 one beaver bought five pounds; "a great and little Hatchet" cost one beaver in 1708 and at York Fort in 1748, one beaver each. Beads seemed to have remained steady, for a beaver bought one-half pound in 1708 and in 1715 at York Fort; they are not listed for this post in 1748 or 1766. Kettles, which were sold by the pound (in which form they were termed "battery"), sold


29/ York Fort Anno Dom. 1715
From Septr 8th 1714 to August 1st 1715

The Acct of the Skins &c. Furs &c. Skyts as hath been traded for in the time of this Acct and are Packt up to be sent home and Validation Beaver as likewise made and what hath been paid by Trade as appears by Goods as is Prized when Valued p. Standard Amounts to

The Several Sorts of Skins traded for in the time of this Acct 1715 — and packt up to be sent home	Number of Skins	Validation	Value	Beaver	Valued and made Beaver
Whole Parchment Beaver	11120	1	as	1	11120
Half Parchment Beaver	2080	2	as	1	1040
Coat Beaver	3250	1	as	1	3250
Moose	2390	1	as	2	4780
Moose Small	20	1	as	1	20
Moose Fawn	5	1	as	½	2½
Buck gri[illegible]	24	1	as	2	48
Otter	76	2	as	1	38
Catt	97	1	as	1	97
Wolfs	2	1	as	2	4
Bear	22	1	as	2	44
Cubs	6	1	as	1	6
Red Fox	18	1	as	1	18
White Fox	21	2	as	1	10½
Martins	1530	3	as	1	510
Ruffolas	2	1	as	3	6
Fitherells	2	2	as	1	1
Musko Rats	8	8	as	1	1
Deer Skins	2	2	as	1	1
44 gl Allarum			as	1	29
1654 Bare Skins			as	1	45

Folio 23 my Ledger

Totl Packt up to be sent home 8 Years trade Valued in Beavrs 21078

On ye Opposite Side appears to Goods Traded Value 16602½

3 Beaver Coat 24 Skins as p Acct of Glass Beads

Fahmouth Mark with going 20 Moos Skins and

40 Dozn Glass Beads &c Sent with Goods Purchased of

Indians Goods &c Sent Cabed in Company

the Sloop & Mary Cabed in Company to the Southward

Which is added to Invoice to the Southward

To Horse taken under this Trade by Mr Sergeant

Value of Goods traded Purchased by Trade

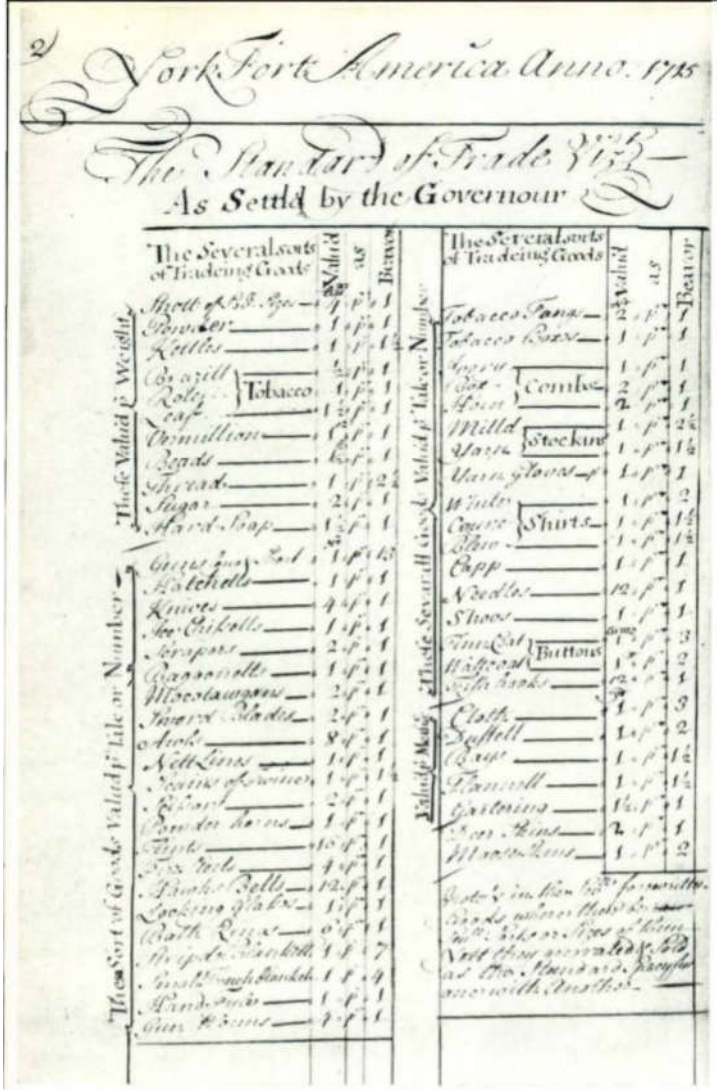
Overgaind p. by trade

List of skins traded at York from Sept. 8th, 1714, to August 1st, 1715. Parchment beaver was a skin taken from the animal and stretched and dried. Coat beaver—supple, greasy skins worn as "toggies" by Indians—were the kind preferred by the hat makers. Values are in "Made Beaver."

for one beaver a pound in the earliest list and one and one-half beaver at York Fort in 1715 and 1749. Despite wars and the troubles of various sorts which plagued the trade into Hudson Bay, prices seem generally speaking to have remained relatively stable. We do know, however, that there were times when the sharp depreciation in value of beaver skins in the European markets did cause the factors at the Company's post real difficulty in explaining to the Indians why a beaver skin could not buy as much as in the past.

Most of the commodities included under the general term of "trade goods" were practical things, and the remainder could best be described as "finery" and non-essentials. For the hunter—in whom the Company was primarily interested—there were guns of various sorts and sizes, shot, powder, powder horns, flints and gun worms*; and to assist him in gathering a variety of foods while on the trail, fish hooks, nets, ice chisels, lines, sword blades and

*An object like a corkscrew to fit on the end of a ramrod and extract wads from a gun barrel.


2/ York Fort America Anno. 1715

The Standard of Trade 1715
As Settld by the Governour

Standard of trade decreed by Governor James Knight in 1715. "Baggonetts" are probably bayonets. "Mocotawgons" are the curved knives, still used by the Indians. "Bays" is baize. Note that deer and moose skins are listed among the trading goods.

bayonets (apparently for conversion into spears) were available. Blankets, flannels, bays (baize) both red and blue, and broadcloth in red, white or blue, shirts, "stockens," worsted sashes, "lac'd coats," and plain coats provided for the hunter's comfort and for that of his family. Some of the yard goods were intended for making up into garments by the women. Duffels, a coarse kind of cloth originating in Holland was also used, it seems, for burying the dead. Yarn gloves kept the hands of the hunter warm and goggles helped to ward off snow blindness. For those festive occasions which the Indian loved so well, and also as favours to be given to chiefs for special services, there were such things as hats, handkerchiefs, English brandy and "Waters, White or Red," although goods of several other and often less spectacular kinds could serve this purpose as well.

For mundane chores, the Indian man could purchase with his furs fire-steels or burning glasses to ignite his fires in camp; axes and hatchets with which to chop wood, and files to sharpen them with. He was more likely to buy materials and tools for his wife to use, however—such things as yard goods, buttons, thread, scissors, needles and brass thimbles—in order that she might be able to make his clothes and his family's. Beads, "gartering," "broad Orris lace," worsted binding and hawk bells of brass she could use to ornament them. Her daily round of duties was probably made a trifle easier also by the possession of brass or copper or tin kettles, metal knives, "alchemy," *i.e.*, a kind of brass, spoons, and awls with which to sew birchbark for wigwams and canoes, or the family moccasins.

Diet was not noticeably affected by trading, although sugar was an early import, and better equipment for hunting and fishing must have increased the food supply considerably. "Brazill" tobacco—the kind which came in hanks or "hands"—was introduced at an early date when it was found that the Virginia type was not selling well; from then on, tobacco was an extremely popular item at York Fort as well as elsewhere. And, in addition to the gay note provided by the "Orris lace," the bright coats and the "worsted sashes," the Company very thoughtfully stocked red feathers, vermilion and black lead with which to paint designs on one's face and body, rings of several kinds, silver ornaments (in later times) and looking glasses in which to admire the ensemble. Hard soap is listed in the *Standard of Trade* at York Fort in 1715, but it was probably used for some purpose with which we are unfamiliar.

The same *Standard* classifies trade goods according to the way in which they are valued; some were sold by weight, others by the item. Shot, powder, kettles, tobacco, vermilion, beads, thread, sugar and hard soap were valued according to their weight; all else by the piece.

Furs were the lifeblood of the Hudson's Bay Company, and as the Indian hunters supplied the furs, the Company saw to it that its customers got the best possible equipment consistent with reason. And this was not always easy. There were frequent complaints from the Indians, and these were relayed by the factors to the proper authorities. Almost invariably, the Governor and Committee listened with sympathy and attention, and to their credit it must be said they followed up with action. Guns, hatchets, and textiles are good examples of commodities which were often the cause of complaint.

For the first few years, the Company seems to have experimented a bit with various sorts of firearms (falconets, musquetoons, blunderbusses, fowling pieces and muskets), but by 1682 was ordering heavily from the Englishman, Mathew Hardeman; in that year it took 215 new and 45 old guns from him, and from Thomas Powell, 100 new and 23 old. On the advice of Pierre Radisson, who it will be recalled, more than once deserted the French and joined the

The great store room on the second floor back of the depot, which used to be piled high with trade goods. Photo taken in the winter of 1923 by Martin Bovey.

English Company, the Governor and Committee ordered about 450 guns from Holland to be sent to Port Nelson; but they soon perceived that "the Hollande guns Doe not please the Indians therefore we will not sende any more but have chose rather though much Dearer to us, to send the best English guns, which we doe not doubt will please the Indians beyond any that the French have & must accordingly be regarded in the standard of commerce." And to George Geyer they wrote: "You shall never bee troubled with Holland Guns again; which whether ignorantly or wilfully put upon us, Wee doe believe hath done our Trade great prejudice, but by your prudent Complacency toward the Indians, the best Goods for the future, Wee hope may be Recovered and the Indians retained to our Factoryes."

The English guns seem to have been satisfactory, for no complaint has come to notice until 1716. In that year, James Knight, writing from York Fort, explained that the Indians did not like the guns they were getting for they "are to heavy & Clumsy the butts to bigg and they Inssisted very much to have the price abated;" and he observed that "there is no man knows how to Use the Guns better than the Indians." The weapon must indeed have reached a new low, for Henry Kelsey, writing three years later from York Fort, complained that "Pickfatt's Guns are the sorryest Goods that can be and the armourer does say that they are no better than the Guinea Guns severall he shewed me have not had the forging filed out of them . . . and the main Springs so weak they will not throw the Hammer up. . . ." Such instruments were not of a kind to promote trade and the Company apparently provided better ones until 1785. Those shipped that year "would have been fatal to Life and Limb of the person who might have used them had not a timely discovery been made of the badness of them."

Similar difficulties with regard to other goods beset the Company, despite the belief of the Governor and Committee that as "choice goods as can be bought for money" were being despatched to the Bay in 1684. But the next year it was necessary to return 1100 hatchets from Albany River, Hayes Island and Rupert River. Hatchets, indeed, seem to have been a never-ending source of trouble; the smiths would not forge them properly and they often shattered at the first blow. Even in the mid-nineteenth century, Governor Sir George Simpson complained bitterly about the quality, observing that a defective hatchet could easily

bring about the death of a hunter, since if he could not cut firewood, he might freeze to death.

Cloth was another material which often gave rise to complaints. In 1728, the factor at York Fort reported that his last shipment was "so stretched with the tenterhooks so that the Selvedge is almost tore from the one end of the piece to the other." This would have been bad enough in itself, but taken with the inferiority of the powder, kettles and hatchets received the same year, it played into the hands of the French. The "Natives are grown so Politick," says the same writer, "in their way . . . now is the time to Obliedge the natives, before the French Draw them to there Settlement. . . ." On this alarming piece of news, the Governor and Committee gave instructions for the factor to make a careful examination of his own and the French goods and see why the Natives preferred the latter, and by all possible means to "procure . . . samples of the several Commodities," etc., in order that an examination might be made and the defect remedied; this they felt was achieved in the shipment of 1740.

Some idea of the amount of trading that went on in the earliest years may be derived from studying the outfit for 1684. In that year there were received at York Fort the following:

300 guns	2 gross of lace
185 barrels of shot	8 pieces of "Victory canvas"
29½ doz. powder horns	13 yards of "blew shalloone"
2000 hatchets	350 yards of cloth
3000 jack-knives	390 blankets, ten of them of French make
3000 large "Rochbury" knives	445 coats (plus ninety-eight for boys)
2000 small knives	2 doz. "plaine shoes"
15 gross of tobacco pipes	80 caps
5000 lb. roll tobacco	4 doz. French falls
247 hogsheads of leaf tobacco	10 lbs. vermilion paint
2 gross of "sissers"	3 gross of ivory combs
252 brass Kettles	
20 pieces of "plaine Callico"	

The coats were in assorted colours, such as red, blue, and "plaine," and sometimes they were of the kind known as "Fool's Coats" *i.e.*, multi-coloured like a jester's, while others were "laced."

Very much the same types of goods were recorded for the early 1670s. Indian trade was, in fact, a highly conservative one and except for the introduction now and then of some exciting novelty, remained remarkably stable.

Virtually all the trade goods, except the tobacco, originated in Europe. Holland produced, as we have seen, some of the firearms and probably the tobacco pipes, beads and "battery" as well. The tin kettles, introduced to the trade in 1686 to see how they would take, probably were an English substitute for the last-mentioned item. Flints, strangely enough, were purchased in France, although plenty of them were knapped in England. Hatchets were originally obtained in the Biscay region of France, but in later times, probably in England. Knives were ordered and perhaps made in England, in 1683, despite the fact that the French cutlery trade was at that time the more advanced. The textiles were almost certainly made in England, except for the "fancy" blankets of French manufacture. Most of the beads must have come from Venice, though some may have been produced in Holland, England and France. Tobacco originated in America, and the silver ornaments which became an article of trade could have been obtained more cheaply in Montreal or Philadelphia than in Europe in the late eighteenth century; they were certainly made in those cities for the Indian trade and were sent in large quantities to Michilimackinac and other points.

The goods were evidently packed in large boxes and put in the holds of the ships outward bound to Hudson Bay. Once there, they were transferred to the stock rooms at York Fort and other posts, there to be opened and the goods sorted. The latter remained on the shelves until such time as there was an opportunity of disposing of them in trade to the Indians who visited the factory, or an opportunity of despatching them in a brigade to some inland post.

Down through the centuries, this scene was re-enacted year after year. Ships brought in cargoes of assorted goods for the Indians; men sorted them and repacked some for shipments to inland posts. Indians came with their furs to pay for the treasures from across the seas; to meet one another; to cajole the factor into giving them higher prices for their furs, or to let them have the goods cheaper; and above all, to have a few days of colourful ceremony and swagger. But of late years, furs and game have become scarce around York Factory, and of necessity the Indians have had to leave too. Without Indians and furs, there could be no trade, and inevitably, York Factory ceased operations. The door closed, and a page of history opened in its place. ◆

Modern Indians trading at the little store in the depot building. A. B. McIvor

VOYAGING TO YORK FACTORY

BY OLIVER WARNER

Mr. Warner is a council member of the Society for Nautical Research, Greenwich, and is the author of the standard history of British Marine Painting.

I—The Ships.

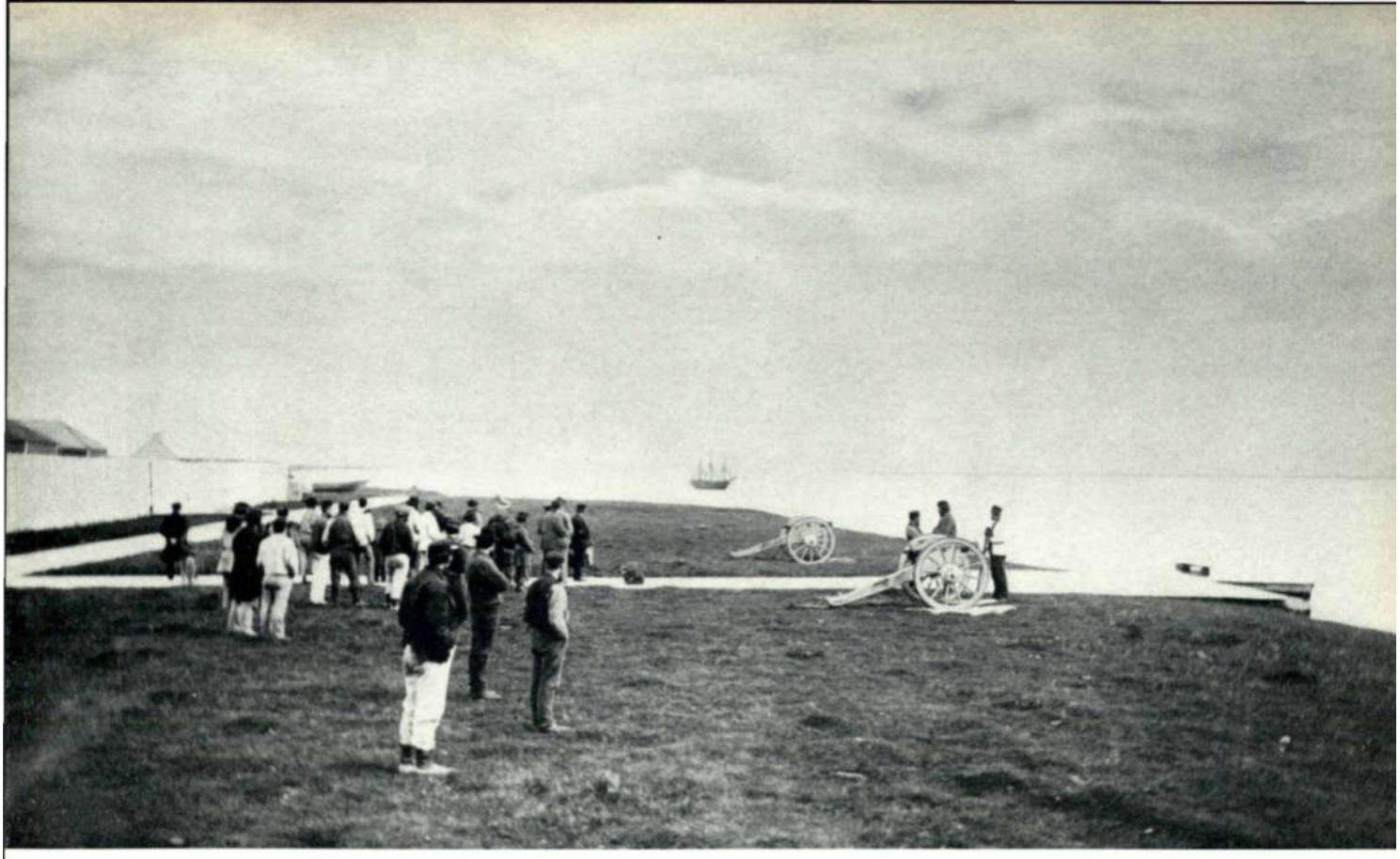
IN the later part of the eighteenth century, two well-known marine artists delineated Hudson's Bay Company ships as they lay in the Thames, ready for their voyage westward. Both pictures are now at Beaver House, the London headquarters. John Hood made his lively wash-drawing in 1769; Francis Holman embarked on an impressive full-scale painting ten years later, in the midst of the War of American Independence. The two artists show the same three ships—the *King George* of 220 tons, the second of her name; the fourth *Prince Rupert* of 202 tons, and the second *Seahorse* of 180 tons, the last with a highly decorative figure-head.

These pictures, valuable as records, and works of art in their own right, represent the high flourish of the trading Company. The ships concerned have certain notable features. All are pierced for guns, as was the Company's practice, though it is unlikely that they carried pieces heavier than 12-pounders. These would have been useful against privateers, though they could not have been expected to drive off a regular man-of-war; they also served for the incessant saluting and gun-signals usual at the time. The white ensign was flown, possibly an echo from earlier days when the king's ships were sometimes employed in the Company's business; and the drift-rails and bulwarks which grace the quarterdecks were painted a distinguishing shade of royal blue, no doubt a style of the time. Everything about the trio speaks of continuity and tradition. This is as it should be, for from the day that the little *Albemarle* of 40 tons sailed to Port Nelson in 1682, soon after the Company had been founded, until the use of a steamship in the later nineteenth century, continuity was a factor in the marine side of the service.

The first ship of any size to sail to York Fort was the first of the three vessels named *Dering*. She arrived in 1687 under the command of William Bond. She was of 120 tons, and was a "pink," that is, she was a flat-bottomed, narrow-sterned three-master, with a triangular or lateen sail at her mizzen mast.

The three ships, *King George*, *Prince Rupert*, and *Seahorse*, would probably have been termed frigates, the type of fast, mainly square-rigged vessels which, owned or chartered, made up the largest proportions of ships sailing to and from York Factory. According to contemporary definition, a frigate implied, in a merchantman, a descent of four or five steps from the quarter-deck into the waist, as distinct from the flush-decked type of vessel.

Another type in at least occasional use (besides the narrow-sterned pink) was the sloop, which was usually single-masted and fore-and-aft rigged, with a gaff-topsail and a jib; and there was at least one hoy, rigged not unlike



The 310-ton barque "Ocean Nymph," bought by the Company in 1862—the year she was built in Quebec—approaches York Factory. In front of the fort the inhabitants get ready to salute her with cannon. Robert Bell

a sloop, though smaller in size, and not really suitable for ocean passages. Ketches also figure in the series, together with galleys and schooners.

The peculiarity of the ketch, which was built with her two masts set well aft, was the great space before the main mast. This made them a useful type in the navy for carrying bombs or mortars, and in the merchant service it gave easy access to the holds. Galleys were flush-decked, and had long outgrown their old definition of being powered by oar as well as sail. They were fine and slender in line. As for the schooners, they usually carried a square fore-topsail, and sometimes a square top-gallant sail and royal, in addition to the fore-and-aft rig characteristic of the type.

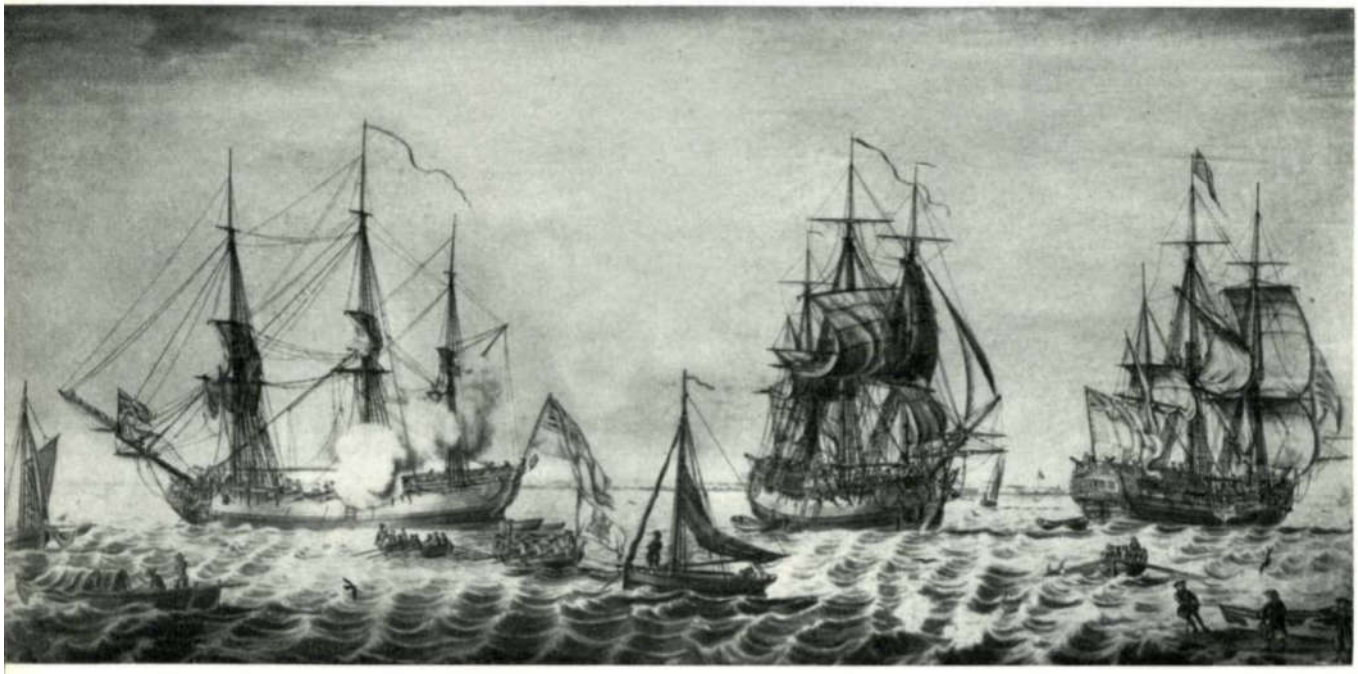
So variously were sea-terms used in earlier times, even in different parts of the same country, that it is surer to rely on such contemporary representations as may be preserved, than to base close descriptions upon definitions which may not exactly fit the case. "Tonnage" is a case in point. This generally meant "burden"—*i.e.*, the number of tons (originally "tuns" of wine) a ship could carry when loaded to a proper sea-trim, but the word was not consistently used in that sense. All that it is safe to say is that a considerable variety and size of vessels appeared on the run to York Factory, and that the greater number did their duty well, often over many years.

The requirements of Joseph Fortescue, factor in the year 1875, for "the class of vessel . . . for future trade between London, Churchill and York Factory" probably varied little over the centuries. Ships were needed "flat in bottom, to allow of crossing the bars of shallow rivers." Fortescue added that they "ought not to draw more water than 10 feet with full cargo," and should have fore and aft hatches. It was, in fact, natural hazards which dictated the type of ship likely to be successful. They could never be large; they must always be well found.

II—Some Captains.

William Bond, who commanded the *Dering* in 1687, is recorded as having made four voyages to the Bay and back as captain, and like so many of the commanders, he had served in a lower rank (he was actually a gunner) before obtaining his first command. Bond was one of the few captains not noted as having met exceptional difficulties with ice on a run which (so some text-books will blandly tell you), should be navigable from the middle of July to October. In fact, all through the decades, captains complained that ice was where they had never met with it before, and that navigation was more difficult than ever!

The next notable personality was Leonard Edgcombe, who made six voyages, and would have added to his service



Wash drawing by John Hood of the "King George" (II), "Seahorse" (II) (centre) and "Prince Rupert" (IV) leaving Gravesend for Hudson Bay in 1769. This is the earliest known picture showing the Company's original house flag—the coat-of-arms on a white field. The original drawing is in Beaver House, London.

had he not encountered French privateers off the Scilly Islands, and been so badly mauled that he had to return for repairs—his fellow captain, John Ford of the *Northwest Fox*, being captured. The Scillys were long a favourite rendezvous for privateers, and in 1696 William Allen, captain of H.M.S. *Bonaventure* which the Admiralty had sent to recapture York Fort from the French, was actually killed in action there on the homeward voyage.

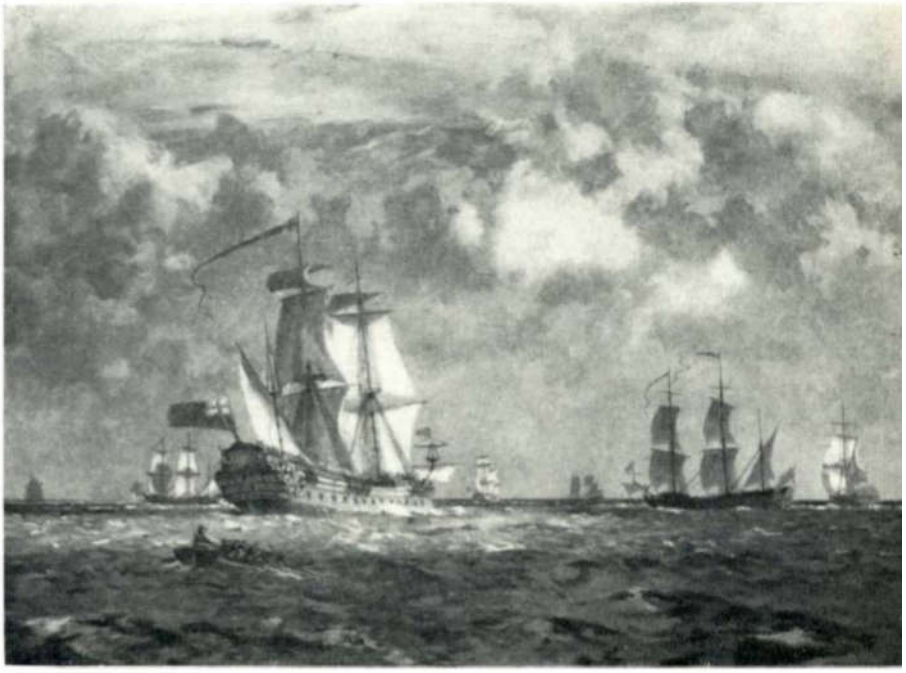
Michael Grimington, who had served as mate to Edgcombe, wintered at York in 1690-1 as captain of the fire ship *Prosperous*, and in 1693, as captain of the *Royal Hudson's Bay*, he helped to recapture Albany, which had been taken by the French. Four years later he and his ship, *Dering*, were captured at York by the French under D'Iberville, but he was allowed to sail her home.

George Spurrell is noted in 1723 as commanding the frigate *Hudson's Bay*, the fourth of her name, built on the Thames by James Taylor. This was another example of continuity in Company affairs, since Taylors and Randalls and Grays and Brents of the Thames built most of the ships throughout the eighteenth century, though chartered vessels were also employed, as indeed they continued to be, the size gradually increasing as cargoes grew. Captains, though they often served long in the same ship, were transferred freely. The special interest of the Spurrells lies in the fact that they were, between them, commanding Company vessels from 1723 to 1763—no less than forty adventurous years—George for 34, and Joseph for 12.

Another pair with long service were the Jonathan Fowlers, senior and junior. Their activities spanned the years between 1744 and 1782, so that they overlapped those of the Spurrells. Both families had, on the whole, a series of trouble-free passages. This was no doubt partly due to experience and skill, though Jonathan Fowler junior recorded a very foggy journey in 1776, and once got into difficulties because someone laid a buoy wrong in Hayes River.

In 1746, going north-about from the Thames with a call at the Orkneys, which was at first a custom during time of war, and later a regular practice, giving opportunity to take aboard labour recruited in the islands, the Company's ships found themselves in the same convoys as an expedition in search of a Northwest Passage. These expedition ships, the *Dobbs* galley and *California*, had been fitted out by Arthur Dobbs and other opponents of the Company's privileges. Both vessels were commanded by ex-Company employees. The interest of the occasion was heightened by the fact that H.M. Sloop *Shark*, in charge of the convoy, was commanded by Christopher Middleton. This officer, after about eighteen voyages to Hudson Bay for the Com-

Capt. Wm. Christopher, who commanded the "Seahorse" (II) from 1771-81 and the "King George" (III) 1783-8.



H.M.S. "Shark" taking leave of the Company's flotilla and the "Dobbs" and "California" off the Orkneys, 1746.
From the painting by Norman Wilkinson in Beaver House.

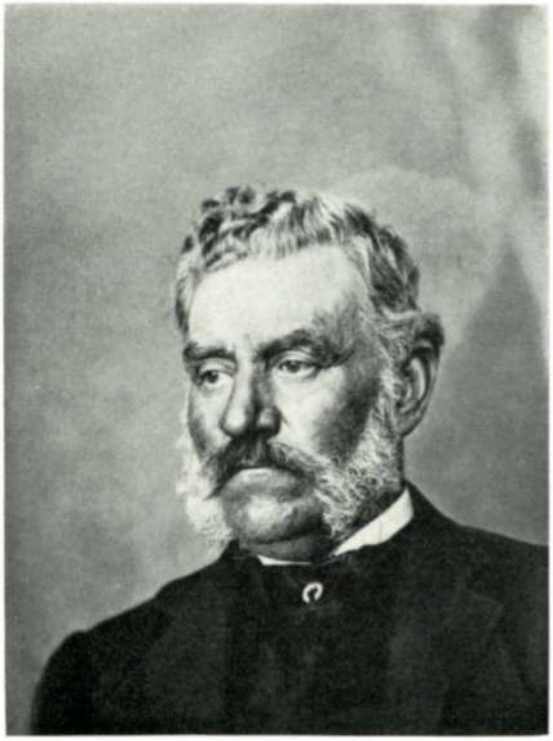
pany, had obtained "a Commission in the King's Service" —through the influence of Arthur Dobbs! In 1742, while in command of H.M.S. *Furnace*, Middleton had made a search for a Northwest Passage, by way of Wager Inlet. His failure, and his expression of the opinion—later justified—that there was in fact no strait on the shore of Hudson Bay leading to the Western Ocean, had caused Dobbs to accuse him of concealing the Passage in the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Admiralty to keep him unemployed for nearly two years during a time of war!

In 1790 Henry Hanwell senior made his first voyage, in charge of the *Seahorse* (III) and for some years he and John Turner seem to have been among the most trusted officers. Turner had an unfortunate experience with the Navy in 1806. When off the coast of Caithness, outward bound, the *King George* (III) was stopped by the frigate *Phoebe* "which we first took for an Enemy's Ship of War," so the log records, "and was not Undeceived till I was on board. Several shot was fired at us." In Turner's view the Captain's "conduct otherwise was a disgrace to the English Navy." Two years later he reported that "the Ice continues very close and heavy, this is my 41 years on the Bay, and the like I neaver experienced before."

Hanwell's last voyage to York Factory was made in 1815, the year of Waterloo, after which time John Davison became a major character, though he had a run of ill-luck with ice. Continuity is apparent all through the nineteenth century; such men as Benjamin Bell, John Davison, Robert Royal, John Grave and David Herd, all with meritorious records, show the trait, and confirm the view that York Factory ships were in vastly experienced hands.

Herd's first voyage as shipmaster was in 1839, with the fifth *Prince Rupert*. Despite being rather more unlucky with ice than many of his fellows, he continued active all through the forties and fifties, his last voyage being with the second *Prince of Wales* in 1863. Notable names in the later years of the period were James Taylor, Henry Bishop, John McPherson, William Barfield and Alexander Gray. Captain Gray had the distinction of taking charge of the first steamship used on the run. This was as late as 1892. Her name was *Erik*. Built at Dundee in 1865, she was acquired by the Company in 1888 for what seems the modest price of four thousand guineas. In the opening year of the present century, the *Erik* still under Captain Gray, grounded off Cape Tatnam and was sold on her return home. After 53 years of work in northern seas, she was sunk by a submarine in August 1918.

Some records of personality may serve to conclude what, from limitation of space, must be no more than a sketch of a wonderful span of service. In 1864, after Captain



Capt. Henry Bishop, who commanded the "Prince Rupert" (VII) on the York Factory run from 1865 to 1873.
J. L. Cotter

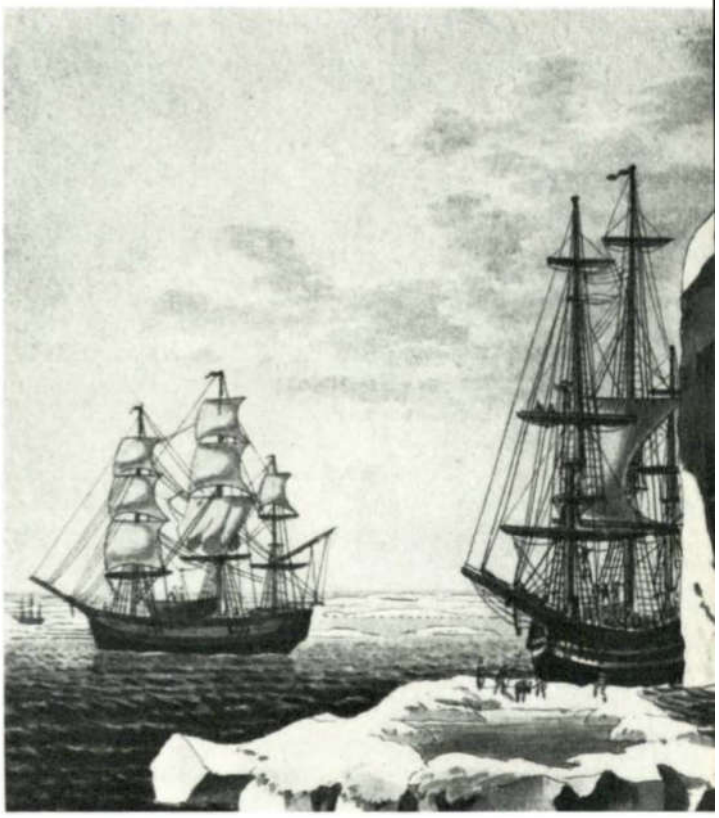
David Herd had made his last voyage in command, the Company's Secretary wrote: "He has made 32 successful voyages to Hudsons Bay, in 26 of which he was in command of ships. During that long period he has had no casualty worth speaking of, nor was there ever a claim made on the Underwriters for losses sustained by vessel or cargo. His success has perhaps been unexampled in any service. . . ." R. M. Ballantyne, famous as a Victorian writer for boys, and himself once in the service of the Company, wrote of Herd that he was "a thin, middle-sized, off-hand man; thoroughly acquainted with his profession; good-humoured and gruff by turns; and he always spoke with the air of an oracle." By the end of his career, Herd must have had good reason for his oracular way.

III—The Hazards.

In well over two hundred years' regular operation of a run known for its hazards, the one certainty was that there would be incidents in plenty. In 1718, still very early days, the *Hudson's Bay* (III), left York Fort on 16 September but met a violent storm and ran aground, receiving such damage from "grinding against the stones" that she made twelve inches of water in two hours. She returned to York, was patched, and sailed again in a little over a week. That would have been smart work by the standards of any age.

Equal swiftness occurred (though in a sadder way) with the succeeding ship of the same name, in 1736. She was lost, with all her cargo, on 1st July, outward bound: "being entangled in ice six leagues within the Cape Resolution, the ice shutt upon us by the sides only (for it was dead calm at the time), and crush'd our sides in, and sunk her in twenty minutes, notwithstanding all our endeavours."

Records exist in some detail of adventures with ice: for instance, in July 1821, when the first *Prince of Wales* (never a very lucky vessel), the *Eddystone* and the *Lord Wellington*, carrying settlers, "were all grappled to the same piece of ice." It was foggy and raining and the *Prince of Wales* was struck and stove in by a large "isle of ice." Part of the cargo was transferred to the *Lord Wellington* and "repairs were carried out, before the journey to York



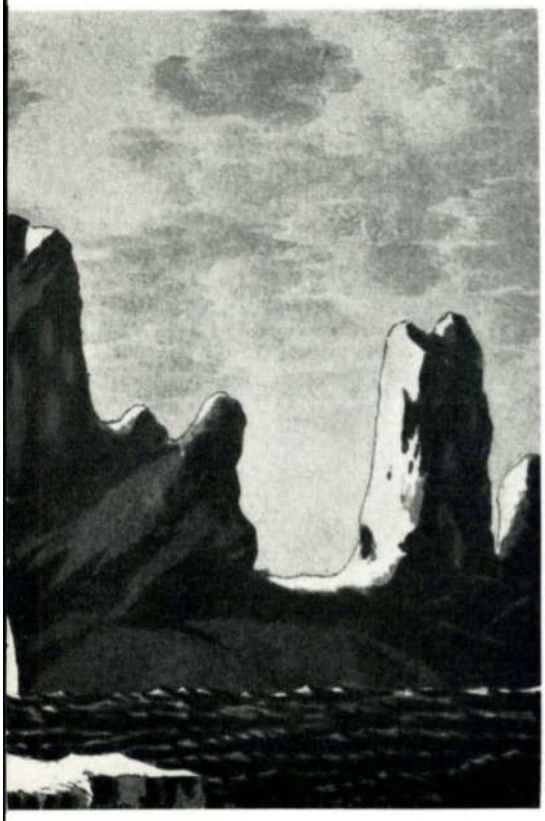
could be completed." Five years later the same ship ran upon a rock in making her outward passage.

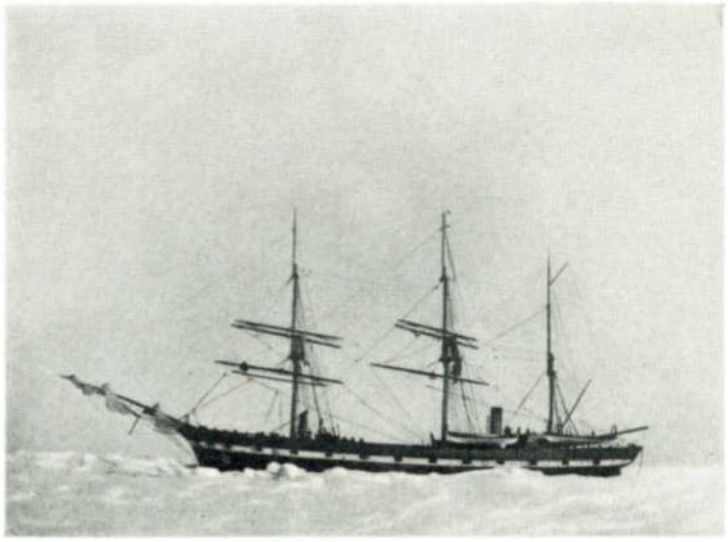
If such adventures were not uncommon in days of sail, even steam did not always bring relief. In 1899 the *Erik* met excessive quantities of ice on her outward voyage, and, in thick fog, she ran into a large iceberg which carried away her jib-boom, bowsprit and port cat-head. Captain Gray reported it as "the most trying voyage I have ever had." The captain was reported as objecting to "navigating his ship in through the long shallows of Port Nelson with no lights or headlands to guide him, only on a clear day the thin fringe of the lowlands showing above the horizon."

Perhaps James Knight summed up, as well as anyone, the hazards of Hudson Strait, in his York Fort Journal for Feb. 12, 1717:

"... There is one thing as I have Often thought to write about wch. is concerning the ships comeing out of England before the 10th of June so many Days as you Send her out before that time it is so many days to[o] Soon & I have Seen the Experience of it myself in Six Voyages as I came into this Country wee have always had the best Passages and clearest of the Ice when wee came out at that time then when wee come out Sooner & I have heard Severall Commanders Say the same beeing freer from Ice for when they come out Sooner they meet with the whole Body of the Ice in the Narrow of the Straights from the Isles of Gods Mercy down to Resolution that the Ships gett into it and cannot gett out again Whereas if they was to Stay a few Days Longer A NWt Wind and the Current as setts from the Norward carrys the Ice out to the Southrd. so Leaves away to cunn the Ship through the Small Shattered Ice the Main body being gon. . . ."

Those remarks are as true today as they were when Captain Knight dipped his quill and wrote them down, two hundred and forty years ago. ◆





The "Erik," first steamer used on the York Factory run in 1892, beset by ice in Hudson Strait, July 1897.

The Swiss settler ship "Lord Wellington" in danger of being crushed by a drifting iceberg in July 1821. From the water colour by Peter Rindisbacher. Public Archives of Canada

The Trappers

BY DOUGLAS LEECHMAN

Dr. Leechman, formerly senior anthropologist at the National Museum, and lately director of Western Canadiana at the Glenbow Foundation, Calgary, is now living in retirement at Victoria.

THERE were pictures of Indians and their dogs in my geography book at school in Scotland and I knew I had to come to see them. I saw them all right, thousands of Indians and dogs too. But I've never been sorry!"

So spoke old Jim Jackson when we were far up the Porcupine River in the northern Yukon and he must have echoed the thoughts of hundreds of young men, fresh from the Old Country, whose first wish when they landed was to see the Indians.

One of these was James Isham, a lad of about sixteen when he reached York Factory in 1732, straight from Holborn in London. Unlike most of his contemporaries and successors, he was not content to let his impressions remain hidden in his head; instead, he wrote down, with meticulous care, almost everything he could find out about the country and its inhabitants. Today, his notes and observations are a priceless mine of information about those early days and early people. Few better pictures of a fur trader's life and of his customers are to be found.

If Isham had a preconceived idea of the "noble red man" he must have been disappointed in what actually confronted him. Here were no noble savages, but a pitifully poor and half-starved people, barely able to keep body and soul together. Indeed, when conditions were even worse than usual, not always able to do that. Begging was instinctive with them, and gratitude unknown. Arrant thieves and liars, importunate beyond belief, and ever ready to turn on one who, not a day before, had befriended them.

A Cree trapper and his family near York Factory in 1821. From the painting by Peter Rindisbacher in the Public Archives, Ottawa.

To the French traders, most of them from Montreal or Quebec, the Indians were no novelty. They were recognized at once for what they were, Crees, who spoke a dialect of Algonkian, a language already familiar to the *coureurs de bois* and others in the fur trade. The tribe living about York Factory were Maskegons, men of the muskegs or swamps, often called Swampy Crees. Their northern boundary was the Churchill River, though Cree war parties and other more peaceful expeditions had pushed many miles farther north and west, as far as the mouth of the Mackenzie River and to the Rockies, in fact. These extensive forays took place after they got firearms, but long before that they had been extending their territory. One large group of Crees had moved out of the woods onto the prairies and are now known as the Plains Cree.

The Swampy Cree once lived farther south than the vicinity of Churchill and York Factory and it is thought that when they moved north they probably displaced a band of Slave Indians from that area. They are not a numerous people. Isham says that only 250 canoes, carrying about 550 people, came to trade each year and this included other tribes as well as the local people, who were generally referred to by the fur traders at York Factory as the Southern Indians, to distinguish them from the Northern Indians, known to us today as Chipewyans, who occupied the area north of the Churchill River as far as Great Slave Lake, thinning out to the north and east on the Barren Lands.

Other occasional visitors to the Factory were the Eskimo, who came down the sea coast from the north. Trade with

them was but seldom satisfactory, for they were wild and dangerous people with little of value to offer. Nor were they encouraged in their visits by the fact that the Indians would often waylay them when they left the post and take everything they had including, often enough, their very lives.

The Assiniboines came to York Factory too. These were a vastly different people, speaking a dialect of the Siouan language and living, in those days, to the west of Lakes Winnipegosis and Manitoba. Since then they have migrated slowly across the prairies to their present homes in the eastern foothills of the Rockies.

The Dogribs, like the Chipewyan an Athapascan group, whose country lay between Great Bear and Great Slave Lakes, often joined forces with them in organizing a trading expedition to the Factory, knowing that the larger the group they could muster, the more impressive and important they would appear to be.

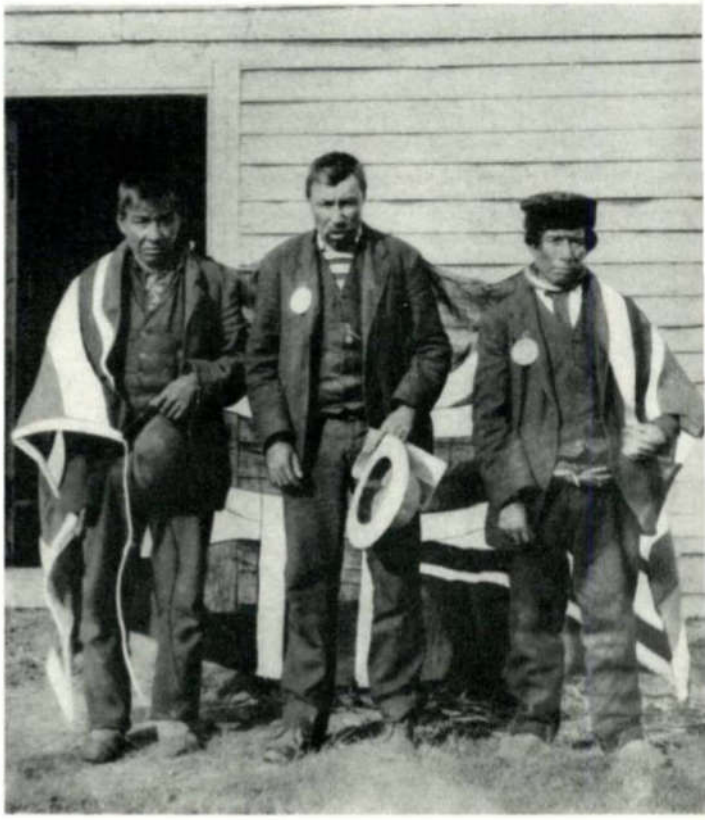
Most early writers seem to agree that there were perceptible physical differences between the various tribes. The Swampy Cree were described as being of moderate stature, well-proportioned, and slender, a corpulent Indian being "a much greater curiosity than a sober one," alert and active. The women were often of great beauty, and Mackenzie's verdict that they were the comeliest Indian women in Canada, was anticipated by Isham, that "sober & Diligent young* man," who says the girls are "Very Bewitchen when Young." Hunchbacks and other deformities were rare and the Indians commented more than once on the large proportion of cripples among the white people.

The Assiniboines attracted particular attention because of the extensive tattooing they practised, with large designs showing serpents and birds. Their method was to prick the skin with sharp bones and rub wet charcoal or gunpowder into the punctures.

The Chipewyans differed from the Crees, being usually taller, with "very low foreheads, small eyes, high cheekbones, Roman noses, full cheeks and in general long broad chins" according to Hearne (ca. 1772) who knew them well. The women pleased him not at all for he says he found them "as destitute of real beauty as any nation I ever saw. The more ordinary ones," he goes on, "are perfect antidotes to love and gallantry." Jérémie, on the other hand, says that the Dogribs "have pleasant and kindly faces."

However marked the distinction between the Northern and Southern Indians in appearance, as far as culture is concerned they were all Indians and their ways were not our ways. The English, brought up in an atmosphere where Christian conduct was regarded as the norm in behaviour, were both surprised and pained to find entire tribes of people who not only neglected to practice those virtues

*He was only 25 when he took over Prince of Wales's Fort in 1741.



Chief and councillors wearing treaty medals at the swearing-in ceremony, York Factory, 1910. Photo by A. V. Thomas in the Public Archives of Manitoba.

that the white held desirable, but had never even had such rules of conduct suggested to them. Mercy for the defeated, generosity towards the needy, kindness, sympathy, justice, were not merely foreign concepts, they were non-existent.

Hardly a fur trader who put pen to paper had a good word for the Indian character, but there were some writers, such as Umfreville (1790), who put matters in a rather more flattering light and we are driven to the conclusion that there were two distinct "Indian characters." He puts the point neatly enough when he says that in trading "fraud, cunning, Indian finesse, and every concomitant vice was practised by them from the boy of twelve to the octogenarian, but when trade was not concerned they were scrupulously honest." The Indian, it would seem, believed that all was fair in trade and war and even today, to state the case mildly, they are not above practising minor deceits.

Father Marest (1694) noted that the Assiniboines were sedate and seemed phlegmatic, one of the early references to the proverbial taciturnity and stoicism of these people, even before they had actually taken up their residence on the plains. The Cree, by way of contrast, he found to be more sprightly, always in motion, always dancing or singing. Both, he notes, are brave and love war. He sug-

gests that the Assiniboines resemble the sober Flemings, while the Crees are like the Gascons.

There is no doubt that the character of the people changed as their contact with the trading posts increased. Father Marest pointed out that "the Indians nearest the fort are cowardly, timorous, idle, stupid, and absolutely vicious." Brandy was the downfall of many of them, those who visited the fort but once a year being the least under its influence.

Then, too, there was an inevitable modification of the characteristics of people who had never seen a white man, and those of their grandchildren, fifty years later. Knight (ca. 1716) says "Them Natives to the Norward are more Savage and brutelike than these and will drink blood and eat raw flesh and fish and loves it as well as some does Strong Drink." Such a description no longer would apply to the tribe with whom Hearne made his journey to the Arctic Ocean in 1771, though they were far from being angels even then.

Isham knew his Southern Indians, the Swampy Cree, well and had a good deal to say about them. He noted their habit of biting off each other's fingers and noses when drunk or in a rage, "and no poizon so Venemous as their teeth." He comments on their lack of chastity, calling them "a crafty sort of people, cheating, Stealing, and Lying they glory in, and Lud' [lewd] from their cradle." As for their personal habits "you must know they are none of the clenliest in their Victuals and cloathing," which is a brave understatement.

One change that followed the establishment of the trading posts was of far-reaching significance. Before the coming of the whites, the Indians relied completely on their own efforts to maintain themselves in the north woods. Their hunting and fishing techniques were well adapted to their environment, they had established trade routes and barter arrangements to enable them to secure necessaries not native to their own districts, and so a reasonably able and industrious man could count on keeping his family, if not in affluence, at least in some semblance of comfort unless an unforeseen calamity overtook him. Game was known to be entirely lacking in certain areas, to be abundant in others at certain seasons. Fish would be

A hunter wearing a beaver "toggy" returns to his lodge with a scalp lifted from an enemy. The bark rogan at bottom right bears the artist's signature, "P. Rindisbacher." An H B copper kettle is on the fire. West Point Museum

Alex Chapman, modern York Factory Cree. A. B. McIvor

Robinson Throassie, a Cree who married a Chipewyan and now lives among them. R. Harrington

Chipewyan boy in native winter costume of caribou skin. R. Harrington

found here, berries could be gathered somewhere else, and a yearly round that took advantage of these known factors was firmly established.

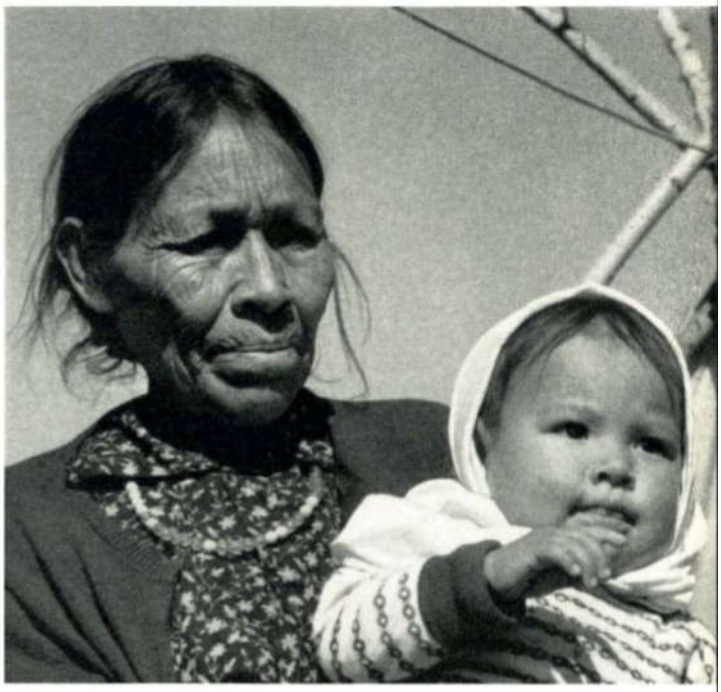
When Jérémie (ca. 1694) arrived he found that the Dogribs lived on fish and caribou, killing the latter with arrows, and building long hunting fences in which they hid snares at intervals; but within less than one generation, in 1713, he reported that the Indians were dying of hunger as they had lost their skill with the bow. By now, the time that they formerly spent in hunting was devoted to trapping animals whose skins were of little use to them and whose flesh, in many cases, was inedible. With the furs they bought powder and shot which soon became essential to existence, and new wants—steel knives, brass kettles, beads, and cloth—dominated their economy.

Not only had hunting and fishing techniques been modified, but many other changes followed the coming of the white man to Hudson Bay. Isham describes both "the ancient wear and apperral of the Natives" and their more recent garments. In the old days the women, he says, wore a leather smock with a loose robe over it, and the men a longer leather coat also with a loose robe for additional warmth when needed, but now they were all using cloth to make a garment "which ties over the shoulder's, and serves them for smock, Gound [gown], and peticoate, (a Very Readyway)."

The Swampy Cree, living as they did at the northern extremity of Cree territory, were obliged by their environment to adopt some of the culture traits of the Eskimo. For example, they turned to soapstone for their cooking pots and, as large sheets of bark or matting were difficult to obtain, they covered their conical wigwams with hides of moose or caribou. More, the women had adopted a crescent-shaped knife, not unlike the Eskimo *ulu*. The Northern Indians (Chipewyans) also made use of soapstone vessels on occasion and built a conical wigwam covered with hides.

Both French and English authors comment on the Indians' practice of polygamy, which contrasted so markedly with European custom. Both the Swampy Crees and the Northern Indians shared this practice which, in fact, was widespread throughout the Northwest Territories and is by no means extinct today in the more remote areas. Among the Northern Indians it was much easier to get a wife than to keep one, for a man had to be prepared to wrestle with any challenger for the possession of any

Swampy Cree woman and grandchild. Bullaty-Lomeo



woman. Many of the more powerful men had seven or eight wives, but a weaker man would have trouble in keeping one, especially if she were at all desirable. Desirability, in their eyes, consisted in strength and activity in packing, meat curing, and skin dressing, not in regularity of features or beauty of complexion. The more far-sighted men tried to marry sisters for, they explained, sisters got along better than strangers.

The position of women in that barren country was not an enviable one. Work was their daily lot and hunger was their fate whenever there was a shortage of food, for custom demanded the men be fed first and the women and children get what was left, if anything. Hearne points out that the women carried the food supplies and doubtless saw to it that they starved as little as possible, but adds that they were in for trouble if they were detected in their pilfering.

There were occasional feasts with gambling, games, and dancing to relieve the monotony of life. Isham writes of the women's double-ball game, a ball game for men, and "other small Divertions" which he thinks fitter for children than for adults.

Difficult as life was for most people, for the aged it was intolerable. Old men and women who could no longer keep up with their group, sick people unable to walk, were perforce left by the trailside. Sometimes a little food was given them and on occasion after resting, they would struggle on and rejoin their families. Often, they would never leave the spot where they last lay down. Others, anticipating eventual desertion, would give a great feast if they were able to, recite the tale of their lives, and then ask their oldest child to strangle them, a request which was usually granted. Cremation was a frequent method of disposing of the dead, but at times the body was merely exposed without any attempt at burial. The Cree buried their dead with most of their effects, according to Isham, who shows by drawings just what the graves were like.

Those of the whites who got to know the Indians intimately, and by no means all of them did so, soon found that witchcraft, magic, and the medicine man were factors of the first importance in the lives of the natives. Hunting and fishing methods depended as much on the proper use of charms as they did on skilled woodcraft. Bait was effective in fishing, they believed, because of magical ingredients, not because it was attractive to the fish as food. A net that had the wrong charms tied in the four corners could not be expected to catch fish, and every hunter

carried a medicine bag with as wide an assortment of "medicines" as any fly-fisherman ever dreamed of.

To them the woods and barrens were populated by spirits, most of them indifferent to man, but some of them dangerous, and these had to be propitiated with offerings. The first goose of the season had to be treated with unusual respect and ceremony and his head decorated with beads. The skull of a slain bear must be cleaned carefully, the jaws tied together, and then placed high on a special pole, out of the reach of dogs that might desecrate it.

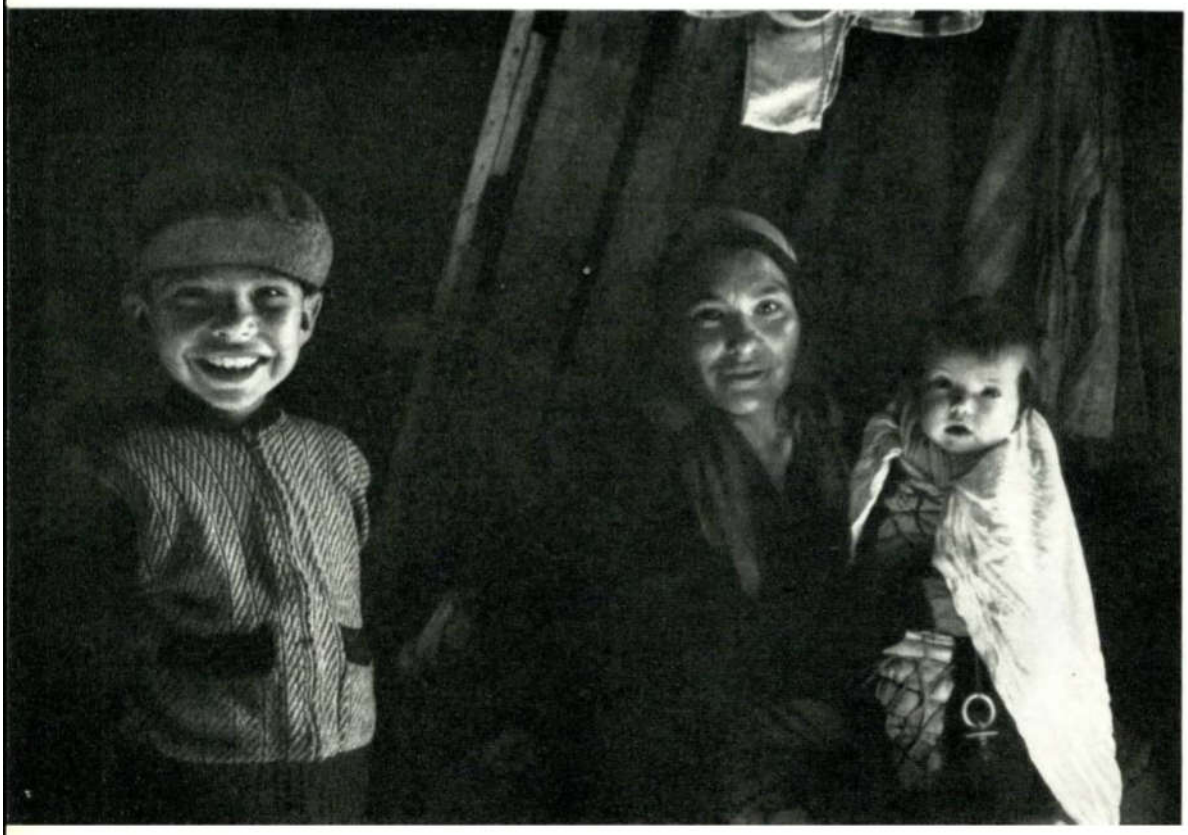
Always there was the fear of another man's malicious use of magical powers, acquired during the spirit quest of early adolescence, when young boys and some girls too retired to lonely spots to fast and pray for a spirit helper and a vision. Accidents, sickness, misfortune were laid to evil spells, not to natural causes, and magic must be fought by stronger magic. The medicine men were called in with their drums and rattles and the sickness was expelled, or the stolen article recovered, and the thief identified.

Relations between the whites and the Indians were, on the whole, remarkably good. The journals, naturally, have more to say of the unusual incidents, the little points of friction, and of the more serious difficulties, than they do of the quiet day-to-day trading, the friendly intercourse, the enjoyable hunting trips taken with an Indian companion. The "home guard" Indians who lived in or near a post became the constant friends and familiars of the trader and his staff, and the Indian women helped with the daily chores.

Capt. James Knight, the Governor, kept a sick Indian boy in his own bedroom for weeks. "I have had a Terrible time of it not haveing 2 hours Rest in 24 Hours for these 10 weeks past," he wrote in 1717, and later recorded the boy's death in his journal with the words "the Loss of this Boy has gon nearer to me than any Missfortunes I have ever mett in my Days."

Intercourse between the various Indian tribes was not always so friendly. It was when the Cree got flintlocks

Below: Maskegon family group.
Right: Praise to the Kichemunito.
Bullaty-Lomeo

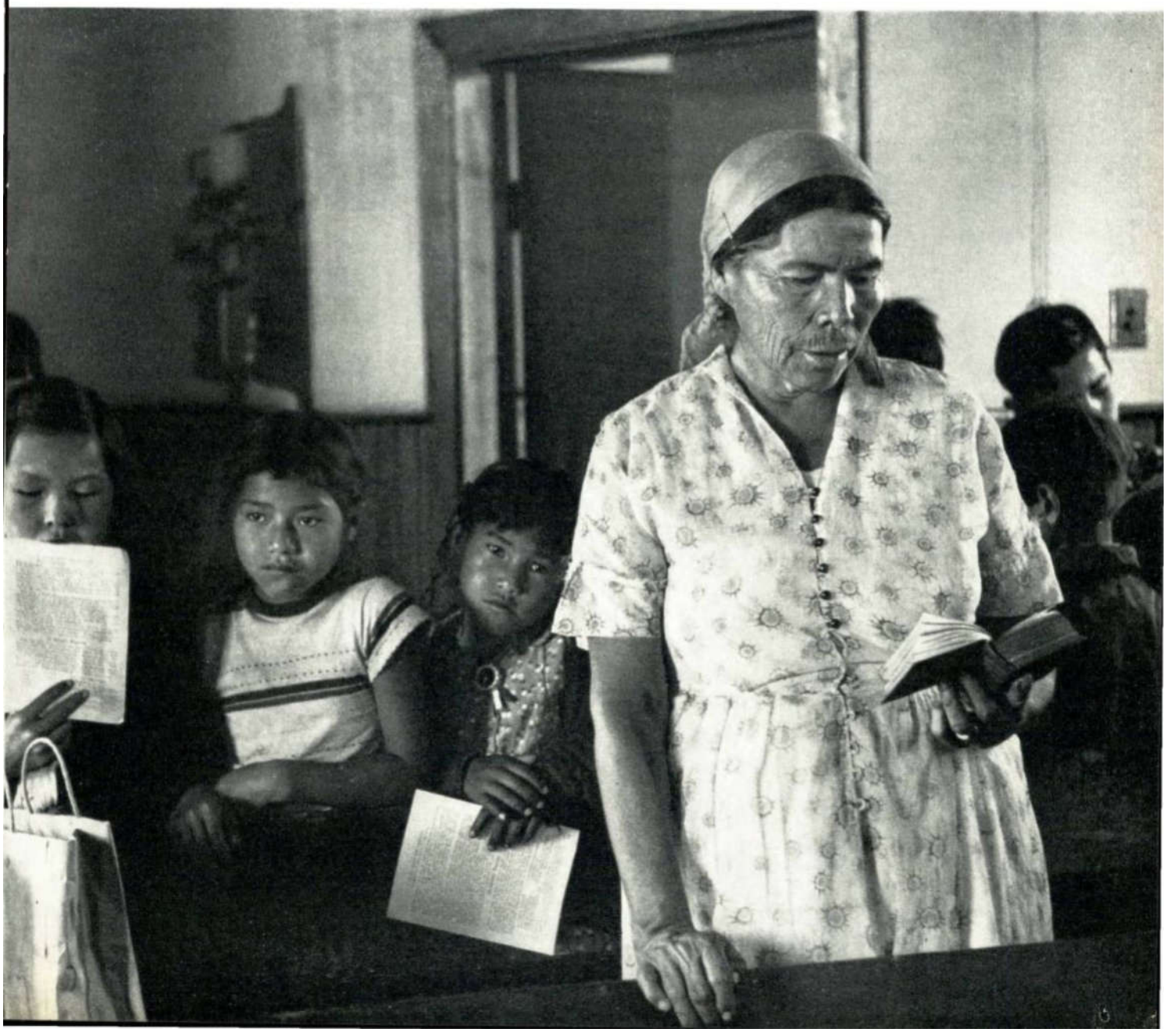


that they raided the Dogribs and took slaves from them, and the Northern Indians had no scruples at all about falling on any band of people weaker than themselves. The possession of firearms was the turning point in most of these encounters, up to the time when all the tribes were armed. It is with an ill-concealed glee that Kelsey (ca. 1690) relates of the Cree that "of late they hunt their Enemies, and with our English guns do make ym flie."

Isham points out that the Indians' perpetual begging by which at one time they enriched themselves considerably, had now almost ceased and life had settled down to a quiet routine, but it was Hearne who saw most clearly that the changes introduced by white civilization had not all been to the advantage of the natives. He points out that those Indians who do not bother with trapping or trading have the better time of it, content merely to follow the deer in summer and build a pound in winter, there to live with an assured food supply and months of feasting and idleness before them.

All things adjust themselves in time and it was once more Isham, no longer a green London apprentice, who learned to live at peace with the people who visited his post. His was a simple formula: "I find good usage and civility agrees well with these Natives,—if they grow obstobilious, a Little correction then sweatening* makes them pliant." ◆

*Sweetening.



A Debarquem.t des

French bombardment of York Factory in 1697, from La Potherie's Histoire de l'Amerique Septentrionale. *The bombs flying through the air are from the hidden mortar, C.*

The French on the Bay

BY GRACE LEE NUTE

Dr. Nute is research associate of the Minnesota Historical Society and an authority on the early history of Hudson Bay.

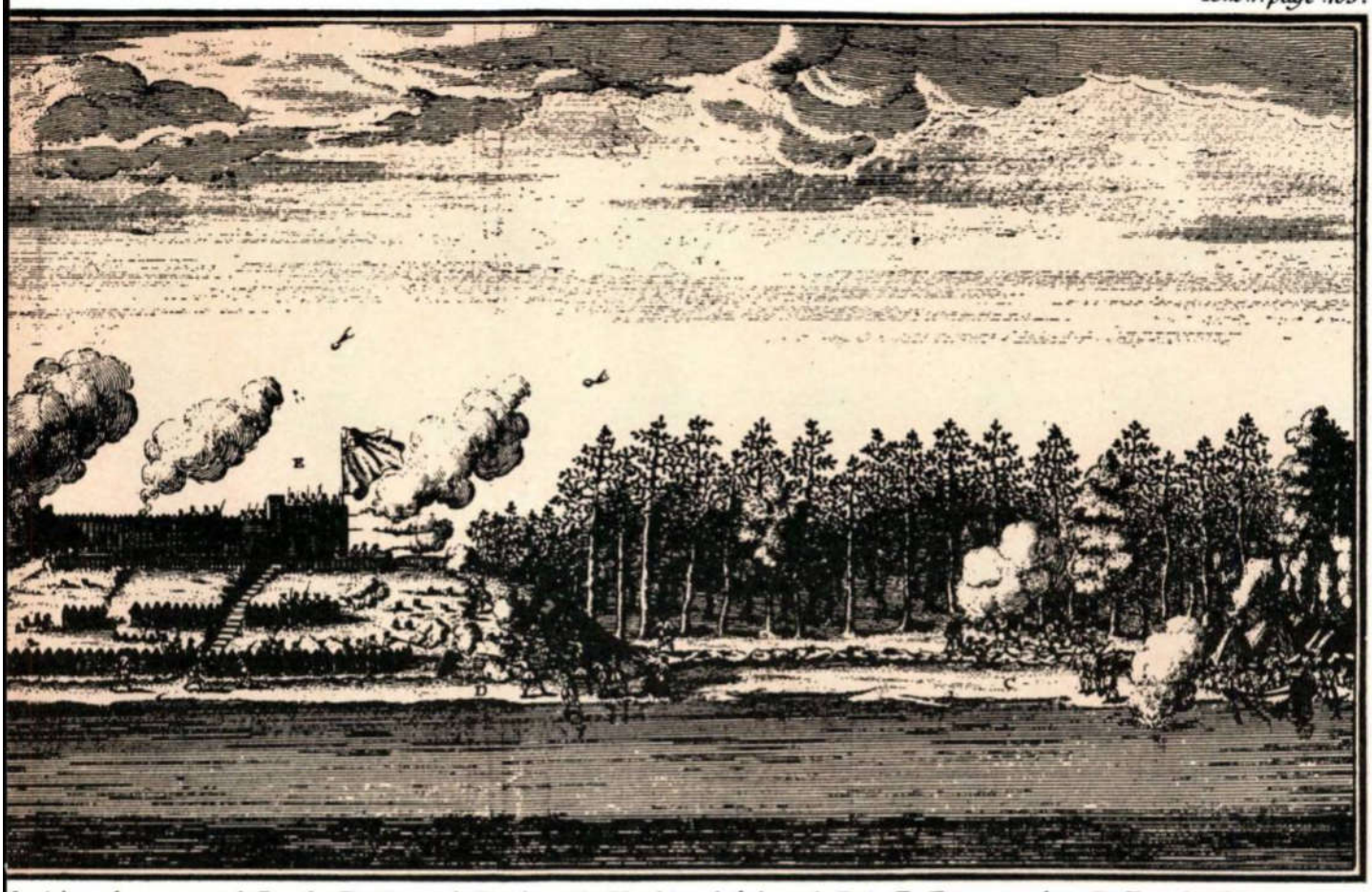
IN English history the period from 1683 to 1783 is sometimes called the Second Hundred Years' War. For the Hudson Bay area this is an apt characterization of those years, since war with the French began, though unofficially, in 1682-3 in that region, and continued intermittently until the end of the American Revolution. Profits from the fur trade and desire to get control of interior North America lay at the bottom of this French-English rivalry. Both a geographic and an economic empire were at stake.

In the three decades before 1683 two Frenchmen were largely responsible for exploring the Bay and founding trading posts there. Médard Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers, and his brother-in-law, Pierre Esprit Radisson, residents of Canada, were the first white men, apparently, to penetrate beyond Lake Superior and to learn of the wealth of furs to be secured there more easily and cheaply by way of Hudson Bay than by the Great Lakes canoe route. After reaching the Lake Superior region in the 1650s and learning much of American geography from the natives, they attempted in the early and middle 1660s to interest Canadian and French authorities in exploring the Hudson Bay route. In vain. The great era of French exploration under the aegis of Talon and Colbert was still to come.

When the two Frenchmen approached New Englanders, however, they were more successful, but adverse weather and lack of proper seamanship prevented them from actually getting into the Bay. Finally, English commissioners of King Charles II interviewed Radisson and Des Groseilliers in New England, recognized their importance, and sent them to England to tell their story of great potential wealth and empire to the king and his court. Members of that court, duly impressed, organized a corporation, which in 1670 became the Hudson's Bay Company.

Meantime the London group of adventurers began a settlement on the eastern shore of the Bay in 1668 under the leadership of Des Groseilliers. Shortly other factories were established elsewhere on the Bay, at the mouths of rivers flowing from interior North America. Two of the streams were the Nelson and the Hayes rivers, which today drain a vast basin of inland Canada and the United States. They enter the Bay on the west coast, where they are divided only by a small spit of land. Here in 1670 Radisson and others tried in vain to establish a Hudson's Bay Company post. They did take formal possession of the region for the King of England, however, and in 1682 the Company began to build there a fort known as Port Nelson.

It stood on the north bank of the Nelson River below Flamborough Head. Unfortunately for the Company, others had anticipated its plans. Already in the summer of 1682 another post had been built farther upstream on



Munitions de guerre et de Bouche. B Camp de Bowbon C Mortié caché dans le Bois D Escarmouches E Fort de Nelson

the Nelson. While Captain Zechariah Gillam was piloting the Company's *Prince Rupert* and the first governor of Port Nelson across the Atlantic, Gillam's son Benjamin of Massachusetts was entering the Bay and setting up a post on Gillam's Island. Likewise that same summer Radisson and Des Groseilliers, who had left the Company in 1675 and returned to France, established a French-Canadian post on the south bank of Hayes River, some fifteen miles upstream. Out of this situation began the first engagements of the Second Hundred Years War.

For the moment the French outwitted both the English and the New Englanders, changed the names of the rivers, seized and expelled the other two first-comer groups after destroying their forts, and departed leaving only Des Groseilliers' son, Jean-Baptiste Chouart, with eight or nine men to hold the area for the French. Not long after the departure of the French, however, an English vessel under John Abraham reached Port Nelson and re-established the Nelson River post. There he maintained Fort Hayes from 1683 to 1687, forcing young Chouart to go upstream and build his fort on Rainbow Island in the Hayes River.

In 1684 the Hudson's Bay Company ordered that there should be two posts at Port Nelson, one on the Nelson River and the other on the Hayes. Abraham's post seems to have been at Walker's Point on the south side of the Nelson River. The Hayes River fort, later to be named York Fort, after the Company's governor, the Duke of York (subsequently King James II), is shown on a contemporary map on the north bank of the Hayes.

In 1684 Radisson returned to the employ of the Company and was sent at once to recover the area from his French nephew. This he accomplished with consummate skill, and departed for England leaving George Geyer building a new post for the Company. Radisson managed to slip by two French Canadian vessels on their way to provision his nephew's post. This relief expedition from Canada was under the command of Pierre La Martinière and carried as chaplain Father Antoine Silvy, who kept a journal of the trip. In it he writes of catching sight "of an English flag and some buildings on a high spot at a point . . . on our right," as he entered Hayes River.

La Martinière and his party remained that winter, after trying vainly to attack and take York Factory. He built a fort ("three houses and a fort . . . of logs . . . defended by two bastions and a salient angle") on the east side of French Creek, a small stream on the south side of Hayes River some three miles below Abraham's post. Most of the winter was passed uncomfortably by the French. The English meantime destroyed young Chouart's former post

on Rainbow Island, only to have their adversaries rebuild it in the spring of 1685. Later that year this post was abandoned and another built by the French on the south bank of the Hayes near Radisson's post of 1682, opposite Fishing Island. This the French themselves destroyed when they returned to Quebec after a highly successful trading season on the Hayes. On his way out of the Bay La Martinière captured the incoming Company ship, *Perpetuana Merchant*, but her sister ship, the *Happy Return*, escaped capture and reached York Factory safely.

In 1686 an overland military expedition was sent from Canada under the command of Chevalier de Troyes. One of his officers was the Sieur d'Iberville and another was Zacharie Robutel, Sieur de la Noue. In succession all the Company forts except Port Nelson and its new outpost, New Severn, fell to the French. D'Iberville was left in charge of the captured posts when De Troyes returned to Quebec. In 1687 D'Iberville sailed for Quebec with a cargo of furs, leaving his brother, de Maricourt, in command.

These events led to negotiations between James II of England and Louis XIV of France, which resulted, in November, 1686, in a treaty of neutrality between the two powers. By its terms each sovereign was to retain all territories then in his possession until a commission should settle the conflicting claims of prior ownership in the Bay. Later negotiations in 1687 resulted in an agreement to maintain the *status quo* at least until January 1, 1689, and even later if the two kings so ordered.

During 1687 frantic efforts were made, especially by the French, to locate proof of their claims to prior discovery and occupation of the Bay. Claims and counterclaims were submitted to the commission by both sides, but before January 1, 1689 came, James II had fled England and William of Orange was in London. On May 17, 1689, William declared war on Louis XIV. The ensuing eight years of struggle are known in America as King William's War. Throughout it the French kept the forts at the Bottom of the Bay.

Despite the supposed neutrality of 1687-88 D'Iberville had been in France seeking royal support for a war of aggression in Hudson Bay. Securing it and reaching the Bay once more in 1688, he found two recently arrived English vessels, the *Churchill* and the *Young*, which he captured along with the *Huband*, another vessel then in the Company's local commerce.

That winter, while the English were once more building a fort on the Albany River, on an island a quarter of a league from the French post, the French maintained a guerrilla warfare and obtained a considerable quantity of furs, both on their own account and through capture of Company vessels and other repositories of its furs. One of the vessels that they did not capture carried Jean Baptiste Chouart, returning to England for the last time from the Bay. Under contract with the Company for a four years' term of service he had returned to the Bay in 1685 and had probably been in the warehouse most of the time. However, we know from Company records that Radisson had sent him inland soon after his arrival to spend the winter, get acquainted with as many natives as possible, and induce them to bring their furs to the forts on the Bay the following year. Henry Kelsey has usually been called the first Company servant to be sent into the interior, but Chouart anticipated him by five years.

Despite French depredations the year 1688 seems to have been profitable for the Company. The *John and Thomas* and the *Dering* got into and out of the Bay safely. In 1689 the new king responded to the Company's pleas for assistance against the French by sending the man-of-war *Hampshire* to the Bay with the Company's *North West Fox* to retake Albany. D'Iberville outfoxed them, however, took both vessels, burned the *Fox*, and sailed for Quebec with his furs in the *Hampshire*.

In 1690 D'Iberville was back in the Bay with the *Ste. Anne*, *St. François*, and *Armes de la Compagnie*. He attacked York Fort, where George Geyer was governor, but was beaten off. An Indian boy saw his ships approaching New Severn, where Thomas Walsh was trader, and gave the alarm. Walsh escaped to the Hayes River fort after blowing up the New Severn post (then called Churchill Fort), and burning it. D'Iberville wintered at Albany. In the spring he went to France with his furs. Meantime Henry Kelsey went up into the interior for the Company and spent two profitable years in the Assiniboine country. The Company in London was so prosperous at this time that it trebled its stock and declared a twenty-five per cent dividend.

Radisson remained in the Bay until 1687, but his life there was far from pleasant. Refugees from the captured English posts, given asylum at the three remaining posts, caused him endless trouble. In 1687 he returned to England "a close prisioner" in one of the Company ships. The malcontents' charges against him were not taken very seriously by Company officials, apparently, for he was naturalized at this time at Company expense and given an addition of fifty pounds per annum to his "salary or pension." The French, on the other hand, put a price on his head. Therefore he doubtless showed good judgment in remaining the rest of his life in London, where he died in 1710. Some of his last years were spent in the employ of the Company.

While King William's War was being waged, the English company determined to make the most of it and regain

control of the Bay. In 1691-2 James Knight was sent as "Governor and Commander in Chief" with four ships, 213 men, 82 guns, and supplies for almost two years. Three of the vessels were frigates. The fourth was a fire ship. In 1693 Knight swept the French from the Bay and paraded his French prisoners in London.

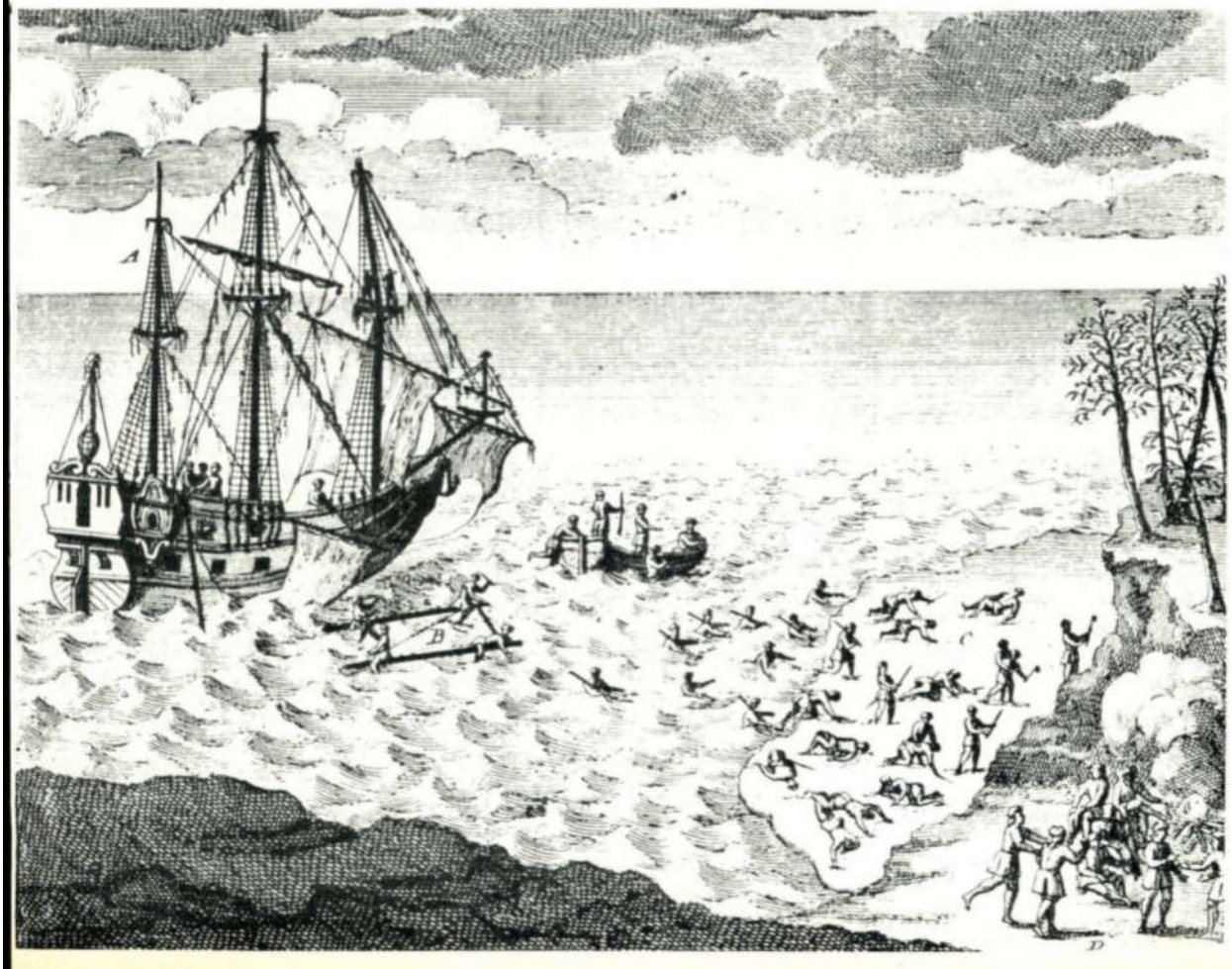
His glory was short lived. In 1694 D'Iberville returned with the *Poli* and the *Salamandre*. Aboard one of the vessels was Father Gabriel Marest, who wrote a long letter describing what occurred on his journey. It also permits us to observe what went on in the Bay that season. Shortly after arrival, with one ship in the Nelson and the other in the Hayes above York Factory, the French compelled that post to surrender on October 4, and renamed it Fort Bourbon. Its furs for the year had already been sent to England. In the fighting D'Iberville lost a beloved younger brother, the Sieur de Châteauguay. Accounts of these events and others include an interesting narrative by Henry Kelsey. Later the Company laid charges against the French of cruel and inhuman treatment of their English captives.

Back and forth surged the fortunes of war. In 1696 the British government sent two warships and three frigates of the Company under Knight to recapture York and take supplies to Albany. On August 31 the French surrendered the fort without bloodshed. Among the captives taken to England was Nicolas Jérémie, who later published an account of both this capture of the fort and the French recapture of it in 1697. In the latter action D'Iberville, as usual, was in command.

He had been plundering in Newfoundland, when he was ordered to return to Hudson Bay in the *Pelican* accompanied by three other ships. Two days after reaching the mouth of the Nelson in September 1697, he was waiting for the rest of the squadron to arrive, when he saw three ships bearing down on him. They proved to be three British ships, H.M.S. *Hampshire* and two Company vessels, *Dering* and *Royal Hudson's Bay*. D'Iberville at once attacked, sank the *Hampshire* with 290 men, captured the *Royal Hudson's Bay* and made the *Dering* flee. Later in London the mate of the captured frigate gave a deposition before the Lords of the Admiralty:

"Capt. Fletcher (who Comanded the Hampshire)" he was reported to have said, "was a brave man, and Just before he gave his last broad Side, called to the said Monsr. D'Brevile, bidding him Strike, which he refuseing to do,

D'Iberville's ship "Pelican" wrecked off the mouth of the Nelson (actually five miles from land.) B is a raft for saving the wounded. C is a snowbank. From La Potherie.



Capt. Fletcher took a Glass and drank to him, telling him, he should dine with him immediately; Upon which the said French Capt. Pledged him in another Glass, And there upon his Men Fired a Volley of Small Shott upon the Hampshire which was returned with a like Volley to the French man; And after that the said Capt. Fletcher was not Seen; So that it was Supposed the said Capt. Fletcher was then killed."

Three days later the *Pelican* and her prize, the *Royal Hudson's Bay*, were driven ashore and wrecked. Many of the French ship's crew were drowned. Meantime the *Dering* escaped to the mouth of the Nelson River.

The next day three more French ships arrived and the fort was taken. The *Dering* was allowed to take the English survivors to England. Again Kelsey and Jérémie give accounts, Kelsey from the interior of the fort, Jérémie from one of the newly arrived French vessels. The best account, however, is to be found in Bacqueville de La Potherie's book, *The History of North America*. This author was aboard the *Pelican* as commissary of the fleet. From his detailed version one catches the indomitable spirit of both contestants in this, the greatest arctic sea battle in North American history.

The war ended that year with the signing of the Treaty of Ryswick by England and France, which provided that each nation should occupy the territory possessed at the time of the signing of the treaty. This meant French possession of York Factory and English possession of Albany.

From 1697 until the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 French influence was paramount in the Bay, but the English navy was usually able to prevent French ships from getting into and out of Hudson Strait. The War of the Spanish Succession, known in America as Queen Anne's War, was being waged from 1702 to 1713, with final glorious victories for John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, the erstwhile governor of the Hudson's Bay Company and Radisson's protector.

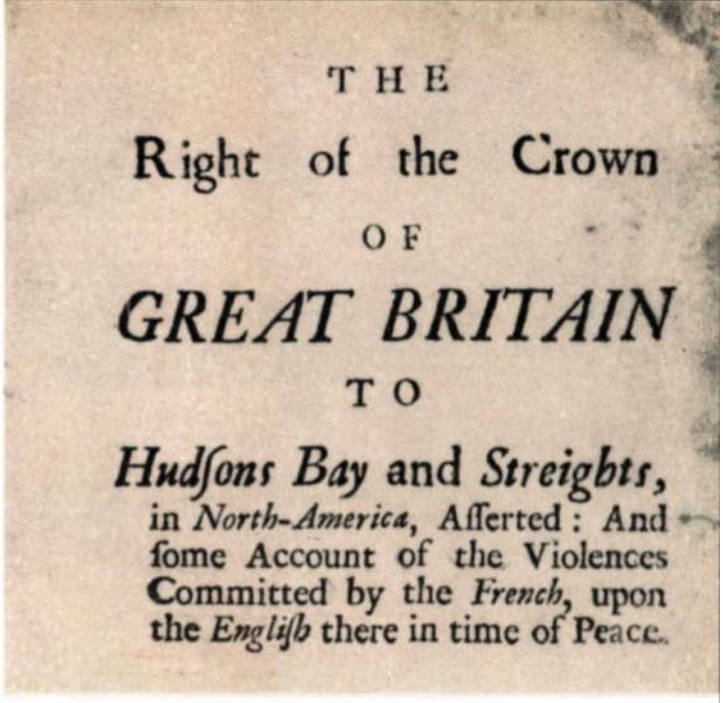
During the French occupation of York, Fort Phélipeaux on the southeast side of Hayes River above Ten Shilling Creek was built close to La Martinière's house of 1683. Indians attacked and sacked this fort in 1712 after killing seven of the French garrison. For this obscure period in the history of York Factory we are dependent largely on Jérémie's account, which has been published in English as *Twenty Years of York Factory*. From 1690 to 1718 no dividend was declared by the Hudson's Bay Company.

During the French occupation the post was known as Fort Bourbon. Jérémie was interpreter at first, and Serigny, Flamanville, and Delisle seem to have had short terms as governors. In 1707 Jérémie had leave to go to France, but no sooner had he arrived there than he was ordered back to take command of Fort Bourbon. Contrary winds delayed the arrival of himself and a new contingent of soldiers, so that his predecessor in office, Delisle, and the former garrison had to winter at the fort. Lack of food and ammunition made it a season of distress and discomfort. Delisle died at the fort from an attack of asthma.

By the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht the Bay and its trade were given back wholly to the English. Governor Knight, with Kelsey as deputy, arrived in the *Union* in 1714 to take over York Factory from the French. When the vessel returned to England that autumn, the French garrison was on board. From that season, 1714-15, York Fort journals have been kept. An entry in Henry Kelsey's journal for 1719 shows that the French, deprived of their best entry to the fur country through the Bay, had already gone back to their former Lake Superior canoe route and were even pressing beyond that great inland sea. On June 12 and 13 of that year Kelsey refers to a French post on Rainy Lake. This was undoubtedly La Noue's Fort Tecamamiouen, about whose very existence there has been serious doubt until this journal was recently examined.

There was little, if any, French activity in and around Hudson Bay from 1714 until almost the close of the American Revolution, though careful preparations for a possible surprise attack during the third of the French and Indian wars were ordered from London on May 10, 1744. Nothing happened and the fort continued its normal routine until France became the ally of the new United States during the Revolution. By that time a new post of the same name as Knight's former station at Churchill had been built, supposedly one of the strongest on the continent. Prince of Wales's Fort was begun in 1732 and was in the process of building until 1771 or thereabouts. It was a stone fortress of European design and was believed impregnable.

How mistaken the Company was in relying on its strength is revealed by events of 1782, when Jean François Galaup, Comte de la Pérouse, commanding a French naval expedition of three vessels, landed between three and four hundred men and took the fort without a shot being fired. Samuel Hearne was in command of the fort, but could muster only thirty-nine men when attacked. The French carried off or destroyed the Company's property, burned the buildings inside the fort, and attempted unsuccessfully to demolish the ramparts. Then they departed to capture York Factory a few days later. A French eyewitness' diary of the taking of York describes it as "made of wood, defended by a battery of fourteen 22-pounders." Four bastions are mentioned as "simply store houses in which were kept their skins and bales of colored cloth and a great many muskets."


THE
Right of the Crown
OF
GREAT BRITAIN
TO
Hudſons Bay and Streights,
in North-America, Aſſerted: And
ſome Account of the Violences
Committed by the French, upon
the Engliſh there in time of Peace.

The title page of a rare pamphlet issued by the H B C and addressed to Queen Anne, outlining the activities of the English and French on Hudson Bay up to 1689. By courtesy of the James F. Bell Colln., University of Minnesota.

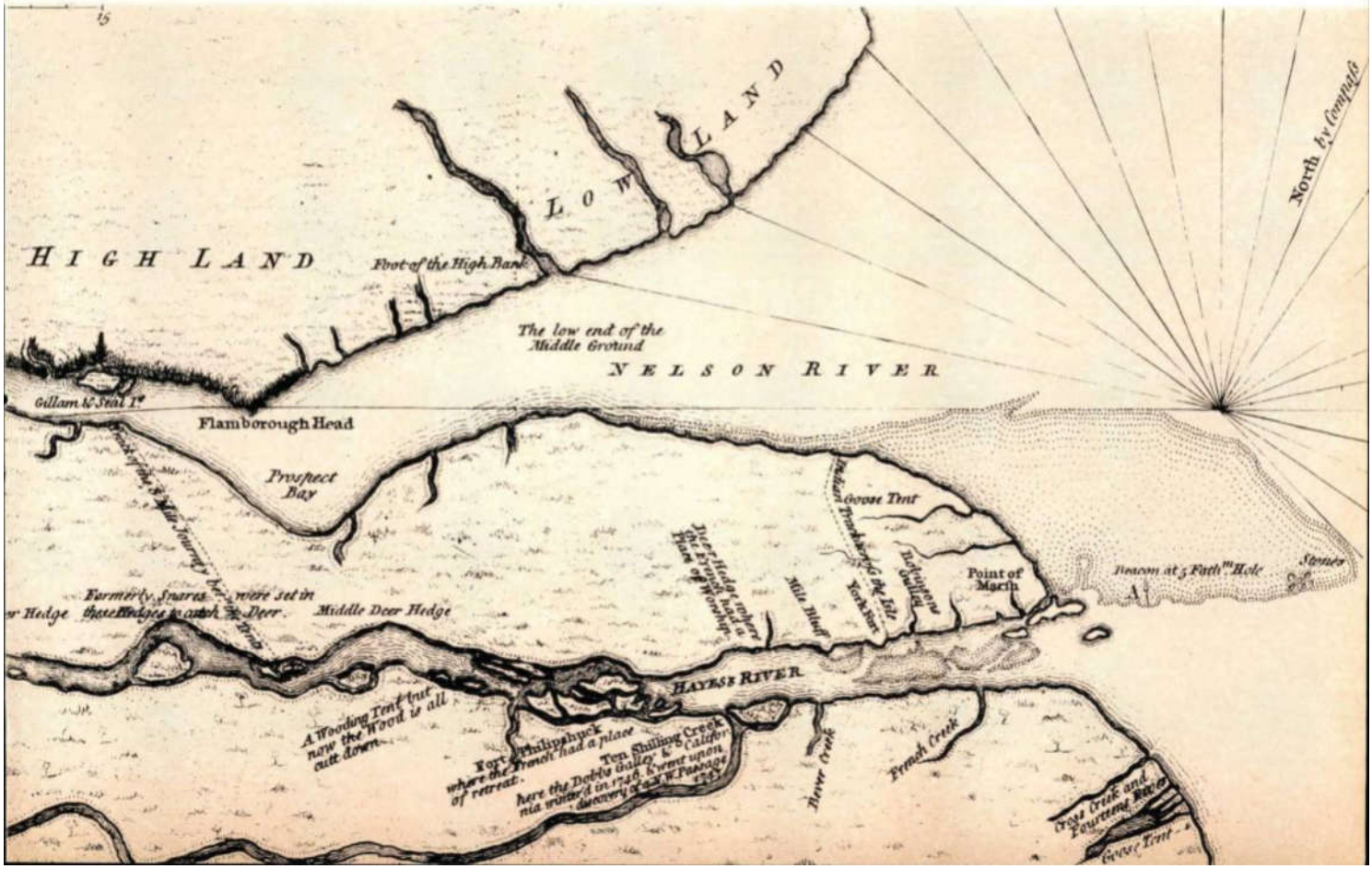
This fort was taken by Frenchmen hacking their way overland on a compass bearing across the spit of land separating Hayes River, on which York Fort was located, from Nelson River, where their vessels were anchored. This course, rather than an assault from the water, was taken to avoid the batteries by the Hayes. Mortars, cannon, and provisions for eight days were carried thus by two hundred and fifty men through the bush, and York capitulated. Its livestock was slaughtered, stores were pillaged, and a general conflagration was produced. La Perouse with his prisoners and booty set sail on September 1, 1782.

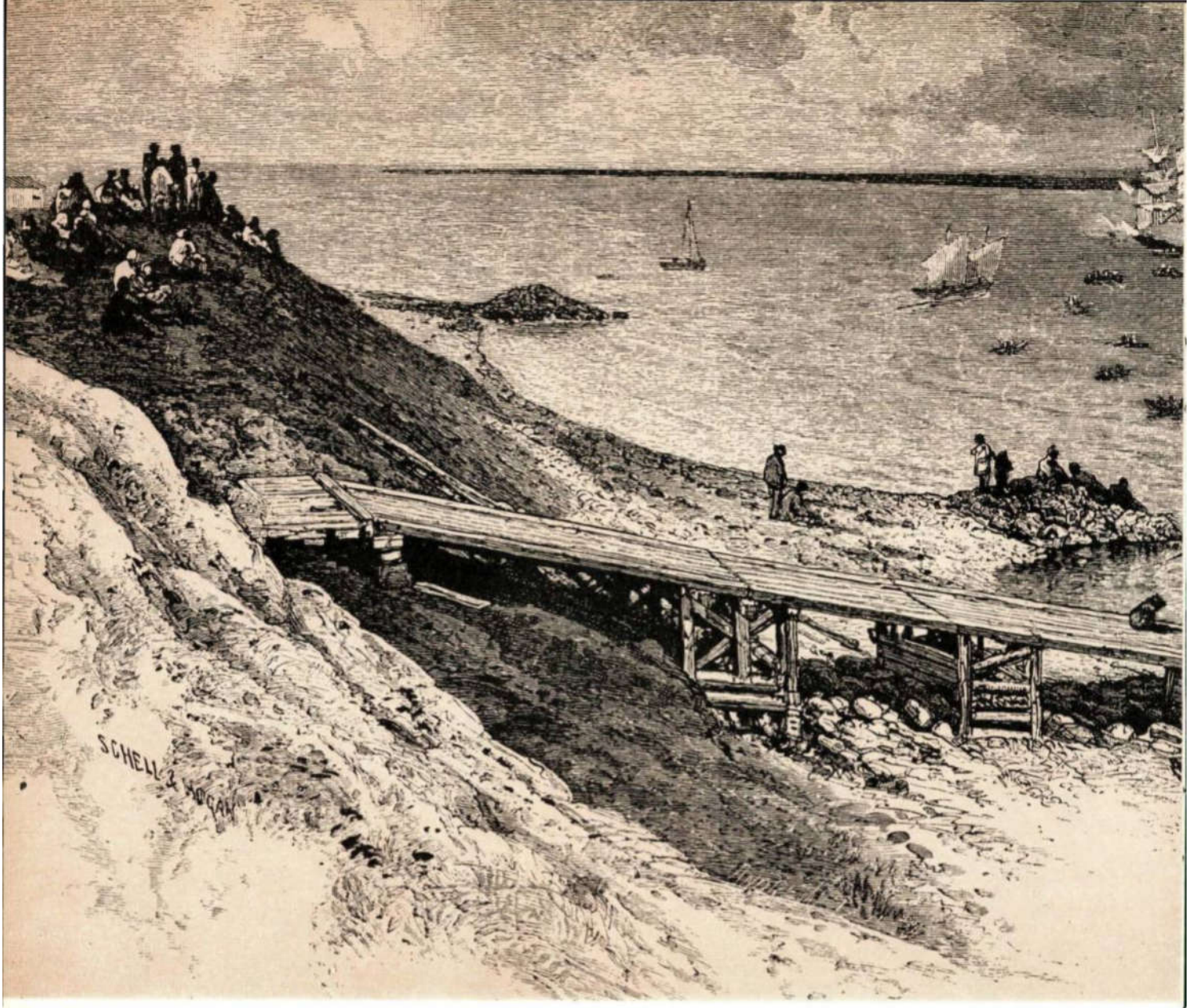
Meantime a great store of furs, gathered by Company men at York, was feverishly piled into the *King George*, lying in the Hayes River. Though La Pérouse sent the *Astrée* around the spit to capture this prize, the ship ran into heavy fog, and when she finally got into the Hayes on August 25, the English vessel was well out in the Bay on her way to London.

With the Peace of Paris in 1783 the war ended and reconstruction could begin in the Bay. Churchill was re-established, but Prince of Wales's Fort was never reoccupied. Its melancholy shell can be seen to this day across the harbor from the elevator of the port of Churchill, where the Hudson Bay Railway terminates.

For a century and three quarters peace has prevailed in the Bay. No French troops have emerged out of Canadian forests and bush to seize Company forts; no French ensigns streaming from warships have appeared to announce assaults on York, Albany, New Severn, or Churchill. The exciting days of the Second Hundred Years War are gone forever. There will be no York Fort henceforth, but not because of enemy action. ◆

Part of Robson's chart of the mouths of the twin rivers in the 1740s, showing the locations of various places mentioned in this account.

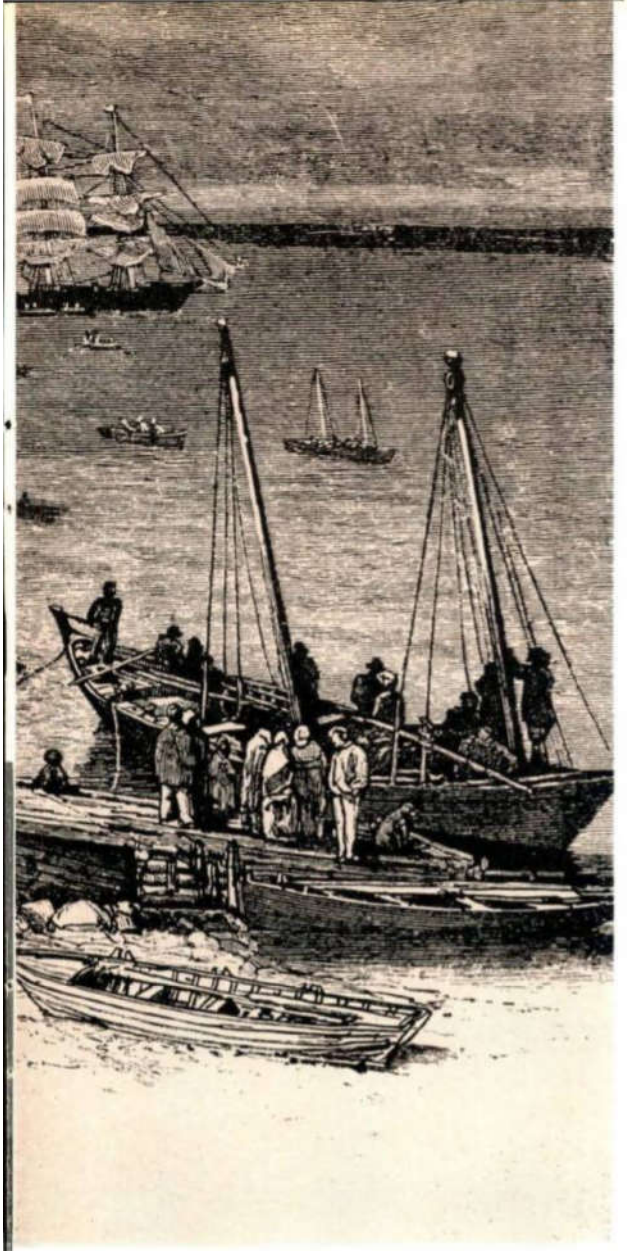




Life on the Hayes

by A. M. JOHNSON

Miss Johnson is the Archivist of the Hudson's Bay Company.



Great excitement as the annual ship arrives at York in 1880. From Grant's "Picturesque Canada."

ALTHOUGH the York Factory records form one of the largest groups in the Company's archives and provide source material of immense value to those interested in the development of the Canadian North-west, it is sometimes rather difficult to build up from them a picture of day to day living on the shores of Hudson Bay. This is not in the least surprising when it is remembered that they are, for the most part, strictly business records. But with the help of descriptive matter which a few Company employees and a number of observant travellers have left, either in documentary or published form, we can at least get a glimpse of a past way of life.

Almost all this descriptive material belongs to the first half of the nineteenth-century, when York was the headquarters of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land. R. M. Ballantyne spent two happy years at York, and in his *Hudson's Bay* he has left an entertaining description of life at the "monstrous blot on a swampy spot, with a partial view of the frozen sea." During the same period, the 1840s, the wife of the officer in charge of York Factory was writing long, gossipy, letters to her relatives in Scotland. Unlike Ballantyne, Letitia Hargrave had no thought of publication and would be astonished if she could know that her letters, published by the Champlain Society, provide one of the most interesting, and certainly the most informative, sources of information on the York Factory of her day. These letters may not be of value to the economic historian; but to those more interested in people than in tables of production figures, that matters little. The official records will show the earnings of Alexis l'Esperance, the well-known guide, but it is Mrs. Hargrave who brings him to life by mentioning that he was a "distinguished" guide, and that he and another were "dressed in sky blue capots scarlet sashes & high scarlet night caps [tuques] and mocassins."

Although York was important to the Company from its beginning in the seventeenth-century, it was not always the large-scale depot storing two years' supplies for the Northern Department and handling tons of freight for Red River settlers and for missionaries. It began as a trading post. The change in its functions took place gradually, and as age and physical needs demanded, the "Confusd. heap of old rotten Houses" ceded to Governor Knight by the French in 1714, grew into the trim group of buildings in which James Hargrave and his contemporaries enjoyed a degree of comfort unknown to earlier occupants. It is difficult for us to realise the utter isolation of Knight's "Lodging" on the extreme edge of a vast, unexplored land. But the isolation, the vulnerability to attacks by savages and enemy French, the fear of starvation and greater dread of the consequences of fire, and the dependence on a Governor and Committee three thousand miles across the ocean formed an accepted part of a way of life. The rewards were modest. A salary, plus a percentage on the beaver traded, plus an occasional gratuity, gave the Governor of York after years of service, a competence, not a fortune.

The renewal of trade at York by Knight in 1714 was with the Indians of the surrounding country and with those who came from far inland. When the ice disappeared from the rivers, flotillas of Indian canoes arrived at the Bay-side, and in his manuscript *Observations on Hudson's Bay* Andrew Graham has left a colourful word-picture of the

pomp and ceremony which preceded the bartering of skins for European goods during the eighteenth-century. (*Beaver* June '47.) Then would follow a busy period packing the furs for shipment to London and in making up the annual accounts. Then, in August, often before the books were finished, came "ship-time." Pleasant anticipation would give way to ever-increasing anxiety if the ship was late, for her annual visit was the only link with the outside world. When the ship did arrive the exchange of cargoes had to be made as quickly as possible so that she could have a chance of getting through Hudson Strait before the ice held fast. This need for haste meant long working hours, and in her time, Mrs. Hargrave mentions her distant winter quarters before freeze-up. In the early period the crews of these brigades were mainly Orcadians and Scotsmen, but in the nineteenth century the Canadian voyageur became a familiar figure at York.

The Company's records show that in 1846, when the proceeds of the Northern Department's trade amounted to the most valuable cargo up to that time shipped to England, there were approximately forty-three men, including officers, employed at York. As against this figure, Knight had a complement of thirty-two in 1714, including a deputy governor, a warehousekeeper, a surgeon, a sloop-master, an armourer, a smith, a cooper, and a tailor. In reply to criticism that there were too many on the strength,

The large house in the centre is the Hargraves'. That on the right is Bachelors' Hall where R. M. Ballantyne lived. A. Harkes

brother, William Mactavish, working in the store from 4.30 a.m. to 8 p.m. at this season.

With the establishment of inland posts the far-distant Indians no longer came to trade at the Bay-side. In time the ceremony described by Graham ceased, and instead of trading with Indian customers for weeks on end, the employees at York prepared cargoes of trading goods and provisions for transport to the inland posts. The summer months were enlivened by the arrivals of brigades of boats laden with furs from the interior, and as well as ensuring a quick turn-round for the ship, haste was necessary if the boats re-laden with the new outfits were to reach their

Knight remarked in his inimitable fashion: "it must never be told Men more as here is no work to do in the Country."

As an example of the everyday work that went on at the fort during the 18th century it is illuminating to read journal entries such as that of April 15, 1784: "Thursday . . . Cox, Magnus Flett & Laughton at work on the new building. Armouror making gun worms Cooper trimming a cask to fix on the head of a beacon, Bricklayer and one man taking down the ruins of the old Chimbles [chimneys], two writing, Bews mending hinges, Taylor at work for trade two making sinnet, Guthrie and Isbester under the Surgeons care. Eleven men with the great Sled getting

Snow Ice &c out of the yard, the rest cutting firewood & cooking. . . ."

Knight required strong, active men to get the enormous quantities of wood needed to keep "a Great fire for 8 Months in the Year Night and Day," and as the years passed it became necessary for the labourers to go further inland to collect the four cart loads used each twenty-four hours to keep the stove alight. All writers speak of the intensely cold, but healthy, winter weather, when exercise could be taken out of doors: and all writers mention the short, hot summers, when the ground around the fort was a fly- and mosquito-infested swamp.

During this less pleasant, but very busy season of the year, visitors from "outside" arrived in the annual ship. The only visitors—as opposed to new recruits—who came to Hayes River from England in the eighteenth-century were the expedition people of the *Dobbs-Galley* and the *California*. The ships spent the winters of 1746-47 in Ten Shilling Creek before setting off in search of a Northwest Passage, but the personnel kept at a polite distance until dissensions drove Captain Francis Smith of the *California* to ask for accommodation within York for himself and his wife Kitty. The nineteenth-century brought a two-way traffic of Selkirk Settlers, Arctic explorers, botanists, missionaries, contingents of the Sixth Regiment of Foot, Chelsea Out-Pensioners, and the Canadian Rifles, members of the Geological Survey of Canada, and a host of other interesting people to this "Grand Central Station" of the North.

The climate of York and, until later times, its complete isolation from food-growing areas, meant that large quantities of European food had to be sent there each year. The seventeenth-century invoices show that beef, pork, cheese, flour, oatmeal, peas, malt vinegar, currants, raisins, spices and butter formed part of the early cargoes. And the Committee usually sent the Governor of York presents of sherry, port or other wine as a mark of favour. European provisions were expensive, and towards the end of the seventeenth-century, when war and bad weather had sent prices sky-high, London urged a "grow more" campaign. Perhaps they had not been fully informed, or maybe did not believe, that crops which came to full maturity in Europe would not, as they expressed it, "bring forth strongly" at York where, as they said, "such rich Mould has laine fallow it may be from the Creation." Gardens were, of course, cultivated from the earliest time both by English and French occupants, and seeds being sent from Europe, and lettuce, green cabbage, and "other small herbs . . . used for making soup in winter" were grown. It is not know just when the traders began to make use of

Christmas dance in Bachelors' Hall. From Ballantyne's "Hudson's Bay."

the native wild berries which Ballantyne mentions being preserved and made into tarts during the winter.

Then there were "country provisions." In his account of twenty years at York Factory from 1697-1713, the Frenchman Jérémie remarks that although the climate was bad the country food gave good living when "Europe helps us out with bread and wine." He was referring, among other things, to the hares and partridges which the men hunted when the weather was not too cold to stir outdoors. He kept a record one year and found that 80 men had eaten 90,000 partridges and 25,000 hares. Ballantyne mentions hunting being the usual winter pastime on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

There was excellent fish to be got at York* and, in addition, there were the seasonal appearances of geese and deer. The goose hunt was a highly-organised affair and the writers of the York journals rarely omitted to note the numbers salted down and to remark on their fear of near starvation if the hunt was a poor one. In the early years the Company's employees set up deer hedges at points up Hayes River which are marked on the "Draught of Nelson & Hayes's River" in Robson's *Hudson's Bay*, and in addition to the deer meat obtained from these hedges and from the Home Guard Indian hunters, a certain amount of trade in provisions was carried on with the Indians. In Ballantyne's day supplies for summer consumption were stored in the ice-house which was filled each spring with blocks of ice each about three feet square. This remained solid during the short summer.

Extra provisions were, unless times were bad, given out on special occasions, particularly at Christmas and New Year. Ballantyne gives a lively description of Christmas Day at York in the 1840s, when one of the most useless oxen was sacrificed to provide a huge roast of beef to accompany the wild goose, partridges and salt pork. What Captain Knight ate or with what ceremony he personally kept Christmas in 1715 we do not know, but he records that for three days of feasting he gave every four men 4 geese, 1 piece of beef, 4 hares, 7 lbs. fresh pork, 2 lbs. fat, 1 lb. butter, 3½ lbs. fruit, 4 lbs. flour, spice, "a good dish of Colwerts" and a hogshead of strong beer. A year later Knight kept Christmas "without a Venison Pasty" and his men "feasted" as far as short supplies would allow

Generally speaking, other occasions for rejoicing during the early period appear to have been New Year's Day, St. George's Day (April 23), when target practice was part of the occasion, and Guy Fawkes' Day (November 5).† Then there were royal birthday and accession dates which helped to break the monotony of work, but May 2, the Company's own day, appears to have passed unnoticed. By the nineteenth-century the custom of having a slight celebration to mark royal birthdays and such-like occasions appears to have been forgotten, and with the increasing recruitment of Scotsmen and Orcadians New Year's Day became more important than Christmas Day. Then dances came into fashion. Ballantyne describes the ball which he and his fellow clerks gave to all the men at the fort, and to the twenty or so Indians belonging to the district, following the Christmas dinner already mentioned. Scotch reels were danced and the music on this occasion was provided by an Indian on a home-made fiddle and by a boy with a kettle drum.

We shall never know the first kind of instrument to make music at the mouth of Hayes River. Since man has made music from the earliest times it is reasonable to suppose that an English instrument, however simple, was first heard on Nelson River when Sir Thomas Button's ships wintered there in 1612-13, and that a Frenchman first performed on Hayes River in 1682, when Radisson and des Groseilliers had returned to their old allegiance. We know that the Quaker Governor Bayly had "a Violl & shell & Strings" with him on James Bay in the 1670s, but so far we have not been fortunate enough to learn if either Governors Geyer or Walsh of York had a taste for string music, or who was the first to introduce the bag-pipes there. Mrs. Hargrave had a piano of six-and-a-half octaves made in Vienna to grace her elegant drawing-room at York, and the Gladman family had a barrel organ in which were a drum and some other instruments. But long before this, Joseph Colen had, in 1798, left there no fewer than six barrel organs which he valued at £18. Jew's harps are listed in the invoices (they are still traded to the Eskimos) and no doubt many, as personal possessions, found their way to York in employees' pockets.

Books, "of which," said Ballantyne, "we had a few," were taken to Hudson Bay from the earliest years, and James Hargrave mentions them as becoming as familiar as household words during the isolation of winter. The Company supplied bibles, prayer books and books of homilies, and surely laid the foundation of a technical library by sending out books on medicine and gardening in 1693. But the titles and exact subject of the "good Books . . . to promote Virtue and discourage Vice" sent out in 1747 are not known. By the time Joseph Colen left York in 1798 after a residence there of about thirteen years, he had acquired a personal collection of about 1,400 volumes.

Sunday services were urged by the Governor and Committee from the early days, but it must be confessed that on occasion they were postponed when heathen customers turned up for trade. We gather from surviving French

*Though James Knight wrote that "I have keteht more fish in one Nights time at Albany River then I have here in all these 2 years."

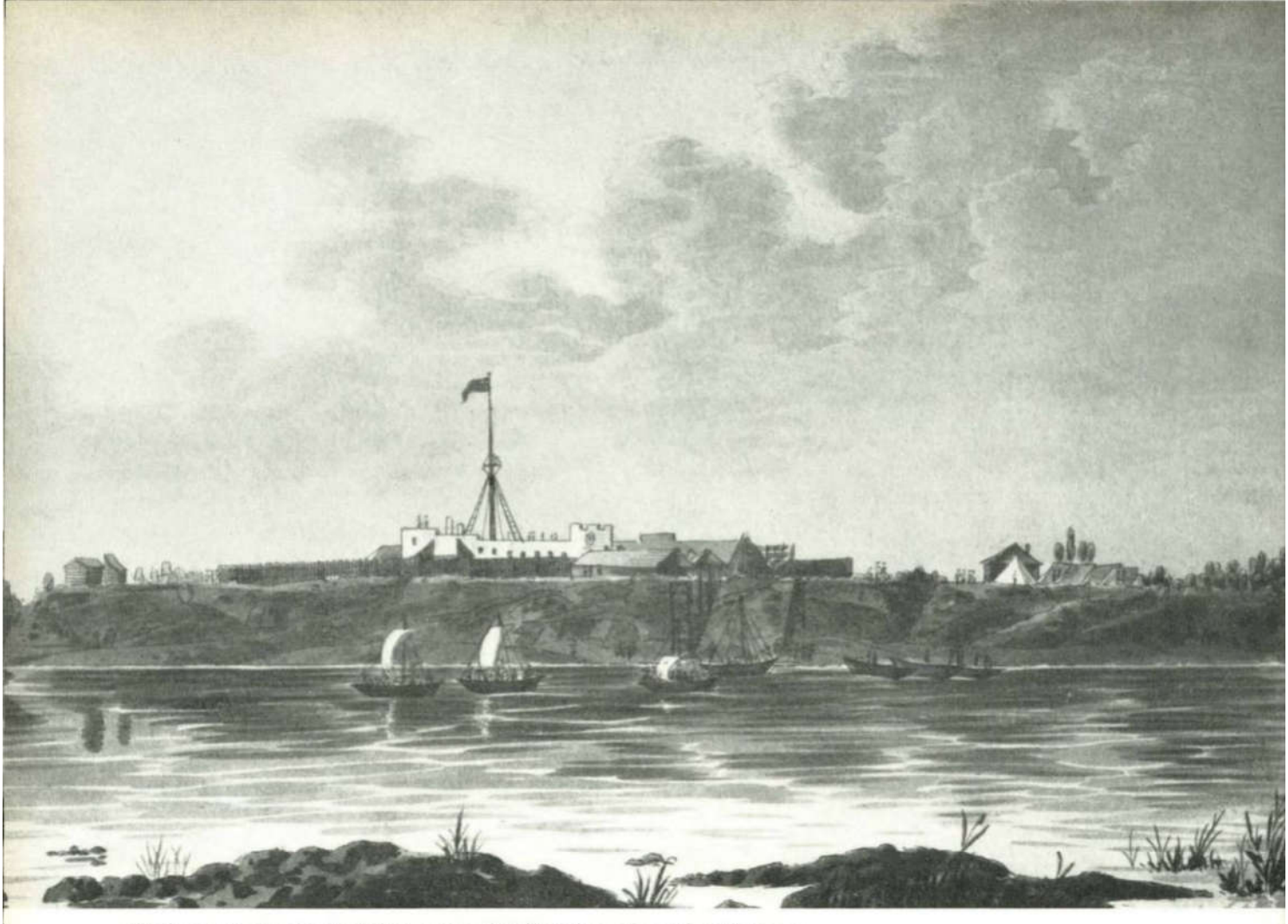
†More than a century after Fawkes' abortive attempt to blow up the Houses of Parliament in 1605, Henry Kelsey vehemently referred to the celebration "in commemoration of that cursed hellish Plot."

The vegetable garden at York in 1880. Robert Bell

accounts of the Port Nelson area that Roman Catholic missionary activity began there almost as soon as fur trading, and it is to one of these early missionaries, Father Marest, that we are indebted for an account of the events on Nelson and Hayes Rivers in 1694. So far as we know, the Reverend Thomas Anderson was the first Protestant clergyman to go to York but his duties would seem to have been those of a Company chaplain rather than those of a missionary to the heathen. That was in 1693. Anderson helped to draw up the terms of surrender—in Latin—when the French captured York in 1694 and, so far as we are aware, not before the Reverend John West landed in 1820 en route to Red River did another Protestant clergyman see the shores of Hudson Bay. In the years that followed ministers of various denominations passed through York, but it was not until the autumn of 1856 that the Bishops of Rupert's Land laid the foundation of the Anglican Mission Church of St. John.

With the growth of railways and the introduction of steam on the northern Canadian rivers the inland posts became independent of York and its importance as a depot gradually declined. It continued as a trading post and, until air transport and radio became parts of northern life, the winter isolation of its occupants must have been almost as complete, but not so uncomfortable, as it was in the days when George Geyer, Thomas Walsh, the Frenchman Jérémie, James Knight and Henry Kelsey—to name but a few—governed at the place which is now only a name on the map of Canada. ◆

A 19th century engraver's idea of the trading room at York in the 1840s. From Ballantyne's "Hudson's Bay."



The Swiss colonists for Red River setting off in York boats from York Factory in 1821. From the water colour by Peter Rindisbacher. Public Archives of Canada

Port of the Pioneers

ON September 26, 1811, William Hemmings Cook, Chief at York Factory, noted in his journal that he had "sent Mr. Geddes to encourage the Indians in Nelson River to kill deer and bring supplies to the factory for the support of our numerous and unexpected visitors." And on September 28 "Mr. Geddes' Boat returned with a very seasonable supply of 13 Deer."

York Factory was preparing to receive the "New Settlers"—colonists for the Earl of Selkirk's settlement at Red River. The decisions reached in London which had given power to Lord Selkirk in the councils of the Company, were now reaching out to the posts.

York Factory had been accustomed to dealing with those who were with and of the fur trade. Now, for the first time they were to become accustomed to settlers—to people who were interested in the soil for what would grow out of it, rather than the animals raised upon it. They had to adjust to people whose objectives were virtually in contrast to their own, who were inexperienced on the frontier, and who had not learned self-reliance.

The first party to arrive came in the last week of September, 1811—a party of servants under Capt. Miles Macdonnell, the newly-appointed Governor of the Red River Settlement, going ahead to prepare for the influx of

settlers. The second group—servants and settlers—came in 1812. A third group—all settlers—arrived in Hudson Bay in 1813 but, failing to reach York Factory, wintered at Fort Churchill, arriving on the Nelson River in the spring of 1814. A small party arrived directly from Britain in 1814. The final large detachment—a group of Swiss settlers destined for the Red River—passed through in 1821.

Of all the many strangers—explorers, missionaries, geologists and others—to whom York Factory was destined to be temporary landlord, there was none towards whom hospitality became so reluctant as the group of 1811.

The *Edward and Ann*, with Macdonnell and the servants destined for the Red River, arrived on September 24, 1811. The *Eddystone*, with Hudson's Bay Company servants, arrived on September 26. This second ship was to have proceeded to Fort Churchill, but the lateness of the season made this impossible. The full brunt of the invasion of Red River settlers and newly indentured Company servants had to be borne by York Factory.

There was not room at the fort itself to accommodate the new arrivals. Further, the prospects of killing "deer" (caribou) were considered to be better north of the Nelson River. A camp had to be created. "Nelson Encampment" was 23 miles from York Factory across the peninsula formed by the Hayes and Nelson Rivers, on the north

BY RALPH HEDLIN

Mr. Hedlin, formerly with the
Winnipeg Free Press, *is now free lancing.*

bank of the Nelson opposite Seal Island. Miles Macdonnell was in command of the Red River group and William Hillier was in command of the group of newly-employed servants, who had arrived aboard the *Eddystone*.

The men prepared to feed themselves, as far as possible. A deer fence was built. As it turned out, it was not responsible for the capture of any deer, although 27 deer were caught with snares in the spring. A party of hunters "with every possible exertion" brought in three brace of partridge in as many weeks.

"We are all in good Health and Spirits . . ." Miles Macdonnell wrote to Cook, at York Factory, on October 10.

During the course of the winter both health and spirits suffered. A total of 59 men were stationed at Nelson Encampment, and Captain Macdonnell, all on his own, decided that 38 should be under his command and destined for the Red River Settlement, leaving 21 under Hillier for the service of the Company. Hillier felt that he had been left "Old Men and Boys" and that the division should have followed discussions between himself and Macdonnell.

Before the winter was over Macdonnell's relations with Cook at York Factory and with William Auld, Superintendent of the Northern Factories—Macdonnell's chief contact within the Company during this period—had deteriorated.

This was, at least in part, a product of totally different backgrounds. In a letter to Cook on November 2nd, Macdonnell felt too little meat was being supplied: "There are scarcely provisions on hand for one month at the rate of 2 lb. of meat to a man per day . . .", he wrote.

York Factory itself was short of food at the time this letter was written. In the regular northern ration two pounds of meat lasted a *week* and, indeed, bacon and oatmeal (but no fresh meat) were being eaten at York at the time.

The request, however, inspired literary creation rather than impatience on the part of Auld: he wrote from Churchill to Cook, ". . . He [Macdonnell] expresses his fears that his situation will be most helpless as he has not more than will serve 1 month at 2 lb. per day each man. . . . It is not the first time that a man's belly has brought his head into jeopardy." And he counselled patience, ". . . tho' I know it is unnecessary you will utterly dismiss from your mind all dissatisfaction at the subject of venison and continue to render the whole party every assistance in your power in every variety of way so that whatever may be the issue of the events we may possess the exquisite satisfaction that always results from conscious rectitude."

But any impatience between the Hudson's Bay Company people and Macdonnell was trivial compared to the trouble that developed among the Red River servants at Nelson Encampment. Macdonnell had hoped that, after his arrival at York Factory, he would gain additional recruits for the Red River from among the servants of the Company. He did get one—William Finlay, a cast-off servant of the Company—whom he hired against the advice of Cook. This man now became difficult. Macdonnell took him before Hillier, who was a magistrate, and he was imprisoned as a refractory servant. But Finlay was released by 13 of his supporters, and they burnt the hut in which he was being held. Macdonnell's authority was virtually gone from this date. Certainly he did not restore it for the months that he remained at York Factory. In

the first week in July, after nearly nine months there, he and the 22 men that still remained with him, departed the fort and moved inland on the second lap of their journey to Red River. York Factory, with a sigh of relief, bid them good-bye.

But the fort was not long without Red River transients. On August 26 a schooner put out from York Factory to carry provisions to the *Robert Taylor*, just arriving from Britain, with 71 men, women and children for Red River.

In almost every way the experience of 1812 was happier than the parallel experience of 1811. The crossing from Britain had been equally long—61 days—but the start in the second year was a full month earlier than it had been in 1811, and the ship dropped anchor at York Factory on August 26.

Things were also well in hand at York Factory. Kenneth McRae was there, on behalf of the Red River settlement, to receive the people. The *King George* brought boats from Churchill Factory so that the servants and settlers could all go down to the Forks (Red River) together. And although Owen Keveny, who commanded the party, was "a harsh disciplinarian" he was also a man of "steadiness, activity and integrity" and he controlled servants and settlers.

Indeed, he brought a form of discipline (described by Gunn and Tuttle in their 1880 *History of Manitoba*) that was a new experience to York Factory. He made some of his wayward servants run the gauntlet—run between two rows of men, all armed with cudgels, who struck them as they passed—"somewhat terrifying and amusing to the beholders, who for the first time saw this very ancient but long neglected mode of punishment put into operation."

In less than two weeks all was prepared for the departure for Red River. To avoid confusion at the portages not all left at once. Divided among eleven boats and three canoes, the party moved out on September 7th, 8th and 9th. They arrived at the Forks on October 27.

Lord Selkirk had hoped to send out a very large party, which he would lead personally, in 1813. The reorganization of sheep farms in Sutherlandshire, in northern Scotland, resulted in the eviction of agricultural tenants. Applications to go to the Red River Settlement came in from 700 persons.

Word had come from York Factory, however, that boats were not available, nails had to be made at Hudson Bay, and the boatbuilders could not hope to have ten boats ready for the river before winter. Less than a hundred settlers, wrote William Auld, could be accommodated.

On June 28, 1813, the *Prince of Wales*, with colonists, and the *Eddystone*, with Company servants, left Britain. Before she reached Hudson Bay typhoid fever had broken out on the *Prince of Wales*—the first time the disease was known in the Hudson's Bay Company trade. Ten colonists died aboard ship and two after disembarking.

For some reason that is still not clear the commander of the ship, Captain Turner, ignored his orders to go to York Factory and instead steered for Fort Churchill and put the colonists and their supplies ashore. Auld hastened up from York Factory, ordered the colonists and their equipment on board and told the recalcitrant Captain Turner to sail to York Factory. The effort was frustrated. The ship ran aground and by the time everything was righted it was too late to go on to York.

Miles Macdonnell and Owen Keveny were, at the time, at York Factory. Keveny completed a difficult trip to Fort Churchill but found the settlers worn out and ill and decided that any attempt to move them overland to York Factory would be impracticable.

On April 6th, 1814, Archibald McDonald, who was in charge of the settlers, set out on snowshoes for York Factory with the whole party, consisting of 21 men and 20 women. They were accompanied by hunters and by guides from York Factory.

In a letter to Selkirk dated May 22, McDonald recorded than when—after a very difficult 140-mile trip—the party arrived at Hayes River ". . . there were two men from York Factory and some Indians pitching tents for our reception. . . ." McDonald went on to York Factory for provisions and was received "very kindly" by Cook and the rest of the officers. Auld had left instructions as to rations—for ten men per week, 70 pounds of oatmeal, 5 pounds of rice, 7 pounds of molasses and three pieces of pork. This was later supplemented with 5 pounds of rice, 10 pounds of oatmeal and 10 partridges.

McDonald had to accommodate himself to what was available. On May 22 he moved his settlers right to York Factory to "get every thing ready for starting tomorrow." Augmented by ten men, the party now consisting of 31 men, 3 women and 17 girls, pushed off for the Red River on May 23.

In 1821 the first large group of non-British people and the largest single contingent for the Red River to appear at York Factory arrived aboard the *Lord Wellington*. This consisted of 165 people from Switzerland, the final recruitment by Lord Selkirk's agents for the Red River Settlement.

They were distinctive for another reason—the shortness of their stay at York Factory. "These people passed the brief time they remained at the Bay very much to their satisfaction," records Donald Gunn. Within "about a week" they were enroute to the Red River. Unfortunately the greater part of their baggage—as was the case with

their predecessors in 1814—had to be left at York Factory, because of a lack of transport. This intensified the bitter hardships of their first winter at the settlement.

The *Prince of Wales*, which carried many of the Selkirk Settlers, had also brought Capt. John Franklin to York Factory. He and his party arrived on August 30, 1819, two years before the Swiss settlers, and left York Factory for England, again on the *Prince of Wales*, a year after the Swiss came through.

Franklin and his party—which included Dr. John Richardson, Midshipmen George Back and Robert Hood—had travelled to Hudson Bay on the first lap of their journey to determine "the latitudes and longitudes of the Northern Coast of North America, and the tending of that Coast from the Mouth of the Copper-Mine River to the eastern extremity of that Continent. . . ." And in the few days they spent at York Factory—August 30 to September 9—Franklin busied himself in collecting information on travel in the Arctic.

Non-commissioned and commissioned officers of the Sixth or Royal First Warwickshire Regt. of Foot, three companies of which passed through York Factory in 1846 and 1848.

He did not content himself with verbal reports. He drew up a series of questions and presented them to the three masters of districts at York Factory—Messrs. Charles, Swaine and Snodie—and two days later "they had the kindness to return very specific and satisfactory answers." Franklin then asked the Resident Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company's Territories, William Williams, to give his opinion in writing, which he did.

Several partners of the North West Company were under detention at York Factory and Franklin sought, not only the goodwill, but also the opinions of these people. He records in his narrative that they gave him most useful information regarding travel in the interior.

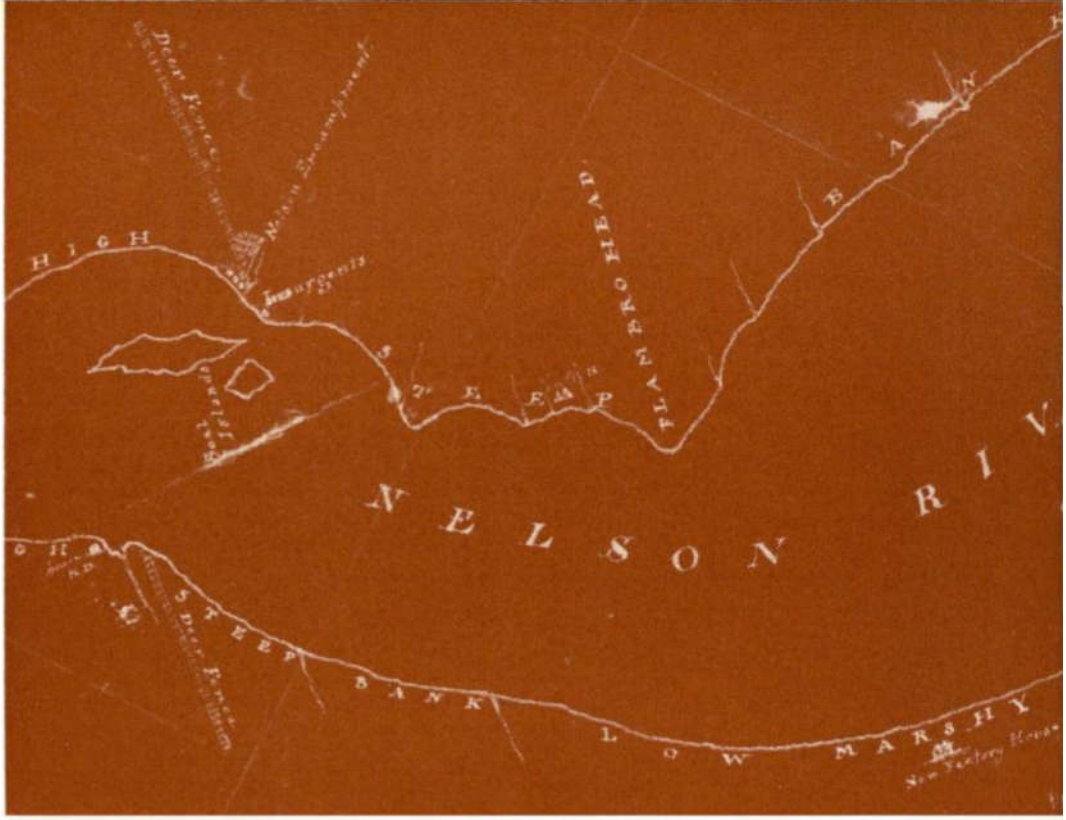
It was while he was at York Factory, indeed, that Franklin issued his memorandum to the officers of his expedition expressly forbidding "any interference in the existing quarrels, or any that might arise, between the two Companies." The competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company had at this time, of course, reached almost a peak of intensity.

Franklin in 1819, like Miles Macdonnell in 1811, first met the North at York Factory. The respective approaches were in sharp contrast: Macdonnell generated misunderstandings through a too opinionated approach; Franklin sought opinions (in writing!) from all whom he regarded as his superiors in the matter of northern travel.

Though the arrival of the colonists in 1811 was a new experience for York Factory, the movement inland of men and freight and the expediting of outgoing people finally became routine. But in August of 1846 a large body of soldiers—the first at York Factory—arrived to be transported south.

They arrived in response to a letter from Sir George Simpson, directed to the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Sir John Pelly. The Oregon boundary question was creating trouble and Sir George was concerned over the possibility of a military combination between the restless half-breeds at Red River and raiders from the United States. Sir John got in touch with the War Office and finally, after much correspondence, was advised that Her Majesty's Government ". . . will be prepared to forward a detachment to Fort Garry during the present Season."

Five months later—well after the Oregon Treaty had been signed—the detachment arrived at York Factory. The party included three companies of the Sixth Foot, consisting of 16 officers, 15 sergeants and 276 other ranks. The Royal Artillery was represented by 28 officers and men, complete with six 6-pounders, six 3-pounders, eight



The encampment of the first body of Selkirk Settlers during the winter of 1811-12 is shown on this contemporary map in the H B C archives.

howitzers and eight mortars. In addition there was a small body of Royal Sappers and Miners. Seventeen women and 19 children rounded out the party. (*Beaver*—December, 1945.)

Apparently the thought of carrying this immense fire power 700 miles—and over 34 portages—to the Red River cooled the military's enthusiasm. Only four of the cannon went on to the Colony. The trip was still not an easy one. Chief Factor Donald Ross, who took charge of the movement later, wrote to Sir George Simpson: ". . . the voyage up was therefore sufficiently tedious, but not more so than might well be expected with such extraordinary cargoes as Her Majesty's stores proved to be—piles of awkward cases of great weight, of every possible shape and size; massive pine tables, benches, wheel-barrows, immense washing tubs." He also reported that one of his boatmen was fatally injured in moving this cargo.

The comments of the people at York Factory, who always travelled light, can only be guessed at; certainly as this material was transferred from ship to boat it would again be clear that they were dealing with the totally inexperienced. However, Sir George Simpson himself arrived at York Factory just prior to the coming of the troops, presumably to greet the people whose arrival was a product of his own importuning. The presence of the great man might well have silenced sarcasms to a whisper.

Chief Factor James Hargrave subsequently reported the departure of the troops to Archibald Barclay, H B C secretary, without any asides: "The whole were embarked in four Brigades of six Boats each, and the last division was got under weigh on the 23rd, each Brigade being under the conduct of an Officer of the Honble. Company's Service. Governor Simpson in Company with Major Crofton left the Factory for Red River Settlement in a Light Canoe on the 24th. A fifth Brigade, also of 6 Boats, laden with Commissariat and Barrack Stores will be sent off on the 28th making in all 30 Boats and Crews employed in the service of the Government. . . ."

The soldiers were a great success at the Red River Settlement. Their high spirits and healthy appetites contributed respectively to the social and economic life of the Colony. And when they again appeared at York Factory in August of 1848, upon their repatriation to England, it was in the shadow of the deep regret of the people of Red River.

It was also a particularly busy time for the fur traders at York Factory. The ships that were taking the troops home had brought in the Chelsea Out-Pensioners who, with their families and supplies and equipment, had to be forwarded to Red River.

The ship carrying the Pensioners and Major Caldwell, their commander, arrived on August 13, 1848, bringing 56 men, 42 women and 57 children. A few days later the troops arrived in strength from Red River. The York Factory Journal records almost feverish transporting of men and supplies between the Factory and the ships, and between ships and Factory. By the end of August the Pensioners had been passed inland. On August 30 the

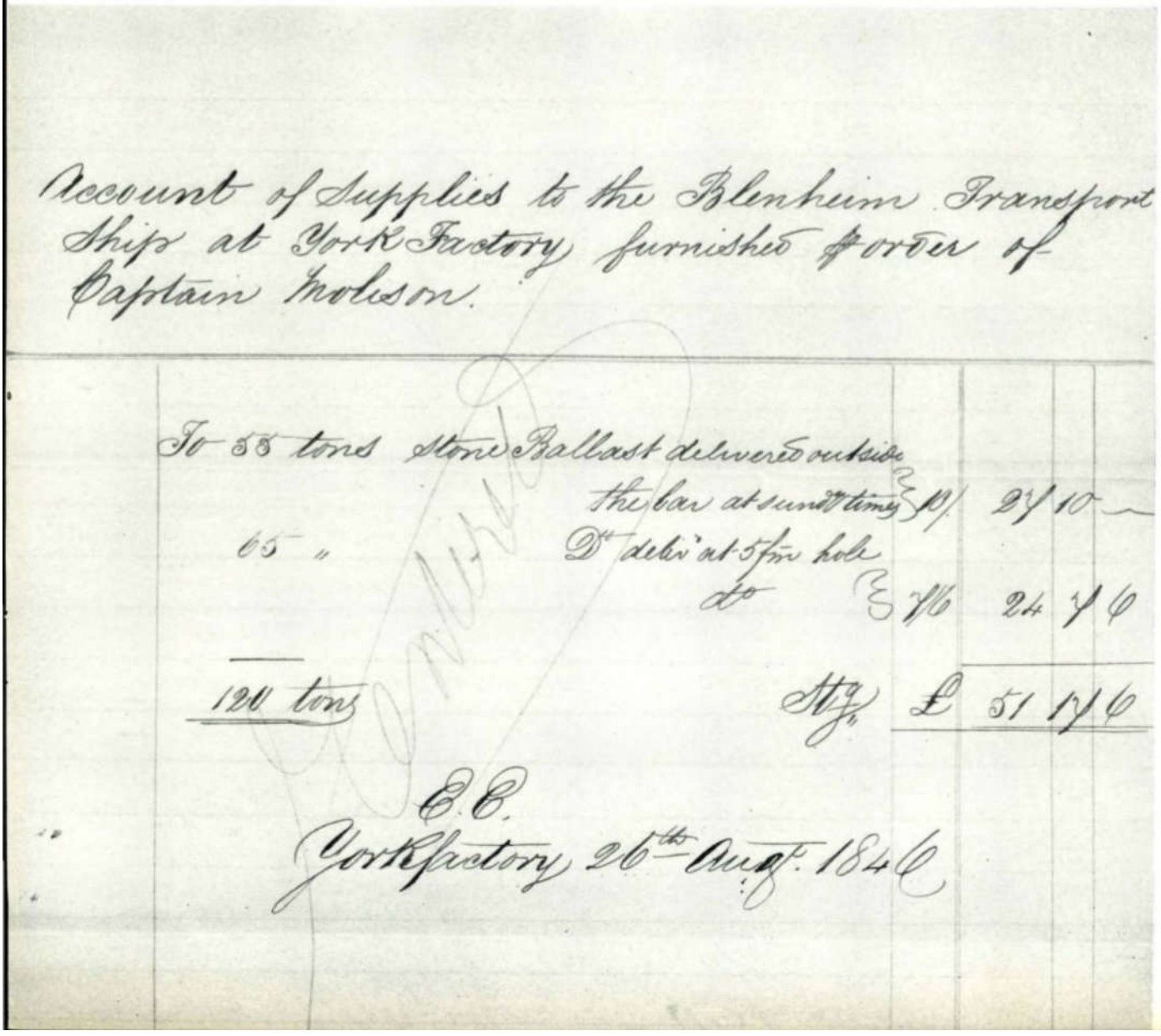
General Palmer left for England with half the troops and on September 12th "... the *Lady Fitzherbert* got underweigh with the morning tide and crossed the bar in safety...."

It was nine years before troops returned to York Factory in any numbers. Some additional pensioners arrived in 1850, and there was some outflow in 1855, when the term of enrolment of the Pensioners expired and the group was disbanded. Some remained in the Settlement, some travelled to Canada, but a group which included the commander, Lt.-Col. Caldwell, travelled back to Britain via York, Factory. In 1857 the Royal Canadian Rifles—100 men, 12 women and a number of children—arrived from Canada (*Beaver*—Autumn, 1957).

The troops appeared at York Factory at the end of August and proceeded south on September 14. They travelled in 12 large York boats that had come up from Fort Garry especially to fetch them. On October 13 troops were once again stationed at Fort Garry.

As with the Sixth Regiment of Foot, York Factory processed the men both coming and going. In 1861 the troops returned to Canada by the way they had come. This exodus of the Royal Canadian Rifles represented the last mass movement of men through York Factory. •

The "Blenheim" was one of the ships which brought out the Sixth Foot from Cork to York. Five Fathom Hole was the anchorage.



Account of Supplies to the Blenheim Transport Ships at York Factory furnished per order of Captain Nolson.

To 55 tons Stone Ballast delivered outside the bar at sundry times	£	10/	27	10 —
65 " D^o deliv^d at 5 fm hole do	£	7/6	24	7 6
120 tons	Stg		£	51 17 6

E.E.

York Factory 26th Augt. 1846

BY ALVIN C. GLUEK

Dr. Gluek is assistant professor of history at the University of Michigan and was the author of "The Minnesota Route" in the Spring 1956 Beaver.

THE FADING GLORY

AFTER the merger of the Hudson's Bay and the North West Companies, York Factory became the Queen of Hudson Bay, a monarch whose realm extended throughout the Northern Department of Rupert's Land. As the central depot for the department, York gathered the fur returns of its subject districts and forwarded into the interior the trading outfits brought to its vast warehouses by sea from London. It gave to countless new servants a first impression of life in Rupert's Land—and a final memory to those who retired and went back to the British Isles. Whenever the Council of the Northern Department assembled on the Bay, York became the administrative headquarters; and it remained the fiscal centre, preparing indents for all outfits and compiling the annual financial statement for the whole department.

The Northern Department's transportation system, to which York Factory was the key, was an awesome triumph of man over nature. Each summer, at least one ship sailed into Hudson Bay with trading goods for York. Navigation was a difficult task requiring skilled masters. A ship's turn-about at York had to be swiftly, expertly managed lest the summer season, so inhospitably brief, suddenly shut down and imprison the vessel in the Bay. Moreover, unloading was additionally complicated by the fact that the Hayes River was too shallow to accommodate larger ships. All goods had to be lightered ashore before they could be warehoused and stored for later distribution according to districts.

York's method of distribution was complex. Transportation in the interior depended upon an involved network of rivers and lakes. From York, the trunk line ran southwest to Norway House, an entrepot at the north end of Lake Winnipeg, and then south to Fort Garry at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. From Lake Winnipeg, a gigantic spur "line" twisted westward along the Saskatchewan River till it reached Edmonton one thousand miles away. Linked to this line by portages were the rivers serving the great northern districts. Within this pattern, brigades of York boats carried furs, provisions, and trading goods from district to district; and beyond it, the Company used carts, horses, and canoes. But despite the obstacles of space and time, it was a marvellous system that functioned well enough for nearly half a century.

The supremacy of York Factory began to fade when an American road arose to challenge its position as the best route to the outside world. In the 1830s, the far-ranging, buffalo-hunting half breeds of the Red River Settlement touched and traded with American posts on the upper Red River and then were drawn into a progressively broader traffic with settlements farther to the south. By the end of the decade, these same men were making "annual excursions to St. Paul and Mendota" to exchange products of

York boat crew struggling to get their heavy wooden craft over a shallow spot on the route between York Factory and Norway House. C. H. M. Gordon

the chase for merchandise suited to their wants. Their vehicle was the Red River cart; their highway, the Red River Valley; and the round-trip, for all its distance, was more convenient and pleasant than the back-breaking passage to York Factory.

In 1843, Norman W. Kittson of the American Fur Company quickened the development of the new route when he established a trading post at Pembina, and thereby translated the American market to within a day's ride of the Red River Settlement. Free trade and smuggling abounded and despite the Company's efforts to crush the illicit traders, they soon won the power, if not the right, to trade within Rupert's Land. All that remained for the Company was to undersell its competitors; and this it did quite successfully for a number of years, although price-cutting drew furs from all the southern districts and demanded larger indents for the Red River District every year.

Kittson's position steadily improved until he could not only undersell the Company but also provide his customers with a greater variety and volume of goods. The explanation for his success was twofold. While the traffic system serving his needs had been ameliorated by a "transportation revolution," the Company's own system had deteriorated until it could no longer meet the demands of its southern districts. In the 'fifties, several American railways reached the Mississippi and joined hands with western steamboat lines. Therefore Kittson could direct his shipments from the East to the river town of his choice and bring them upstream to St. Paul with regularity and dispatch. And beyond, the gap was readily filled by the Red River cart.

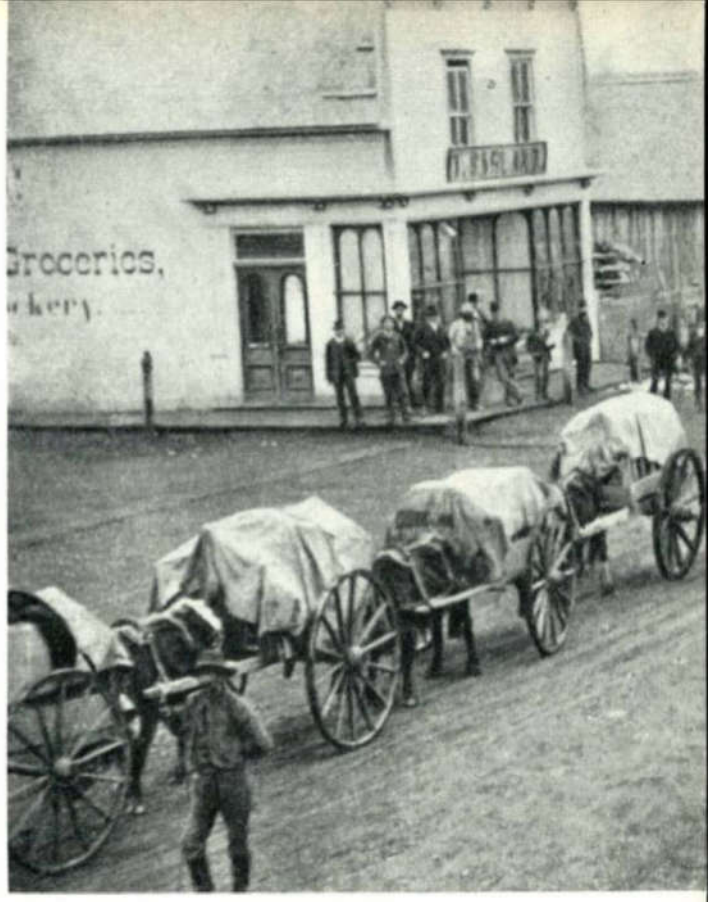
By contrast the York system was slow, laborious, and uncertain. Kittson ordered his goods in the winter and got them in the summer. The Company's outfits were ordered two or three years in advance of delivery; and to guard against the system's occasional breakdowns, reserves had always to be kept on hand. Shipment by steamer and railroad from Liverpool or London to St. Paul took from twenty-six to thirty-two days. With good luck, a ship to York could make the passage in thirty days. But this was rare. Many vessels, after a fast crossing, found Hudson Strait so choked with ice that the last leg of their voyage required a month or more. For a price, Kittson could always find men willing to cart from St. Paul to Pembina

or Red River; but good, reliable men were hard to find at any price to work the York boats.The work involved was so distasteful that few of the Company's servants would perform it. After 1836, much of the freighting was done by private contractors; but they, too, had difficulty getting enough recruits. The settlers were loath to leave other more rewarding jobs for the peril and labour of the heavy wooden craft. Brigades were often composed of "poor sapless fellows" or, like the Portage la Loche boys, "of rough & terrible fellows caring little for the contents of the packages."

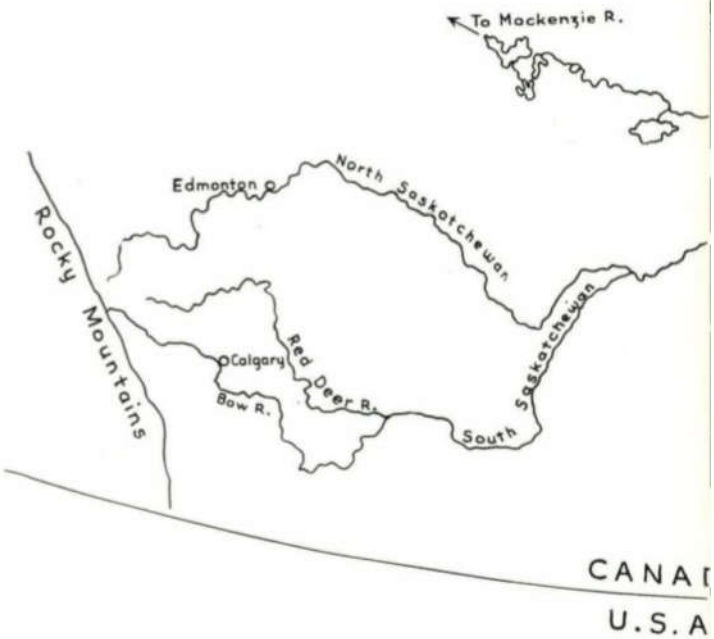
A cost-comparison of both routes reflected the time difference between them. By the 'fifties, freightage from London to St. Paul was decidedly less than from London to York. But the case for St. Paul did not rest upon freightage alone. There was also the matter of interest—of the invisible charges that worked day and night against the Company. Kittson needed little or no inventory; the Company had to have enough for two or three years. And Kittson's merchandise varied according to taste and fashion; while the Company's offerings were always two years out of style.

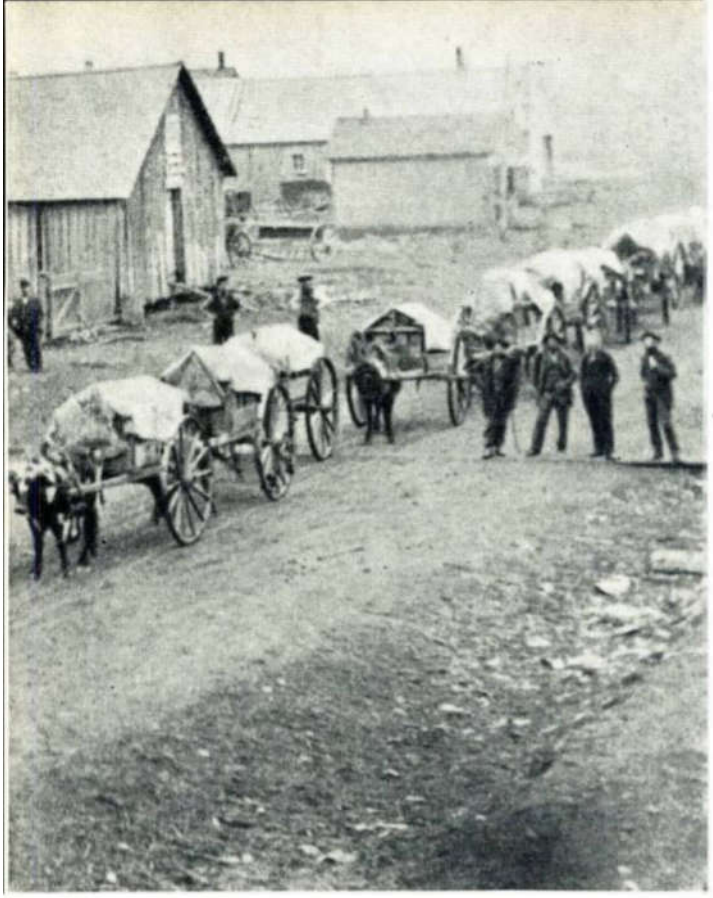
Perhaps the most telling argument against the York route was its inflexibility. It could not be readily expanded to meet growing demands. This was a defect of which Sir George Simpson had been made aware while endeavouring to create an export trade for the Red River Settlement. He realized that if such a trade ever matured, the Company's trunk line to York Factory could never bear the additional load. He therefore promoted the building of an auxiliary line, the Winter Road, intended to run from Norway House to York Factory. Begun in 1825, the road's history lingered for a decade or so, a grisly, gloomy tale told in terms of frozen oxen and ruined outfits. Fortunately for the Company, Red River did not develop a staple for export and the road was never needed. But by the 'fifties, the situation had changed. Ever increasing outfits for the Red River District and its own mounting returns were straining the trunk line. In 1855, the shelves of the Company's Red River sale shops were often bare. Two years later, when the Royal Canadian Rifles came down to Fort Garry, the system broke down completely. Needed supplies had to be left behind at York Factory. In the following year, the Hudson's Bay Company turned to the Minnesota route for relief.

Opened in 1858, on a trial basis, to bring in part of the Red River outfit, the Minnesota route proved an immediate success. The Company swiftly expanded the route, efficiently fusing together American and/or Canadian railways, steamers on the Mississippi, carts and/or wagons on the prairies, and, for the last leg, a steamer on the Red

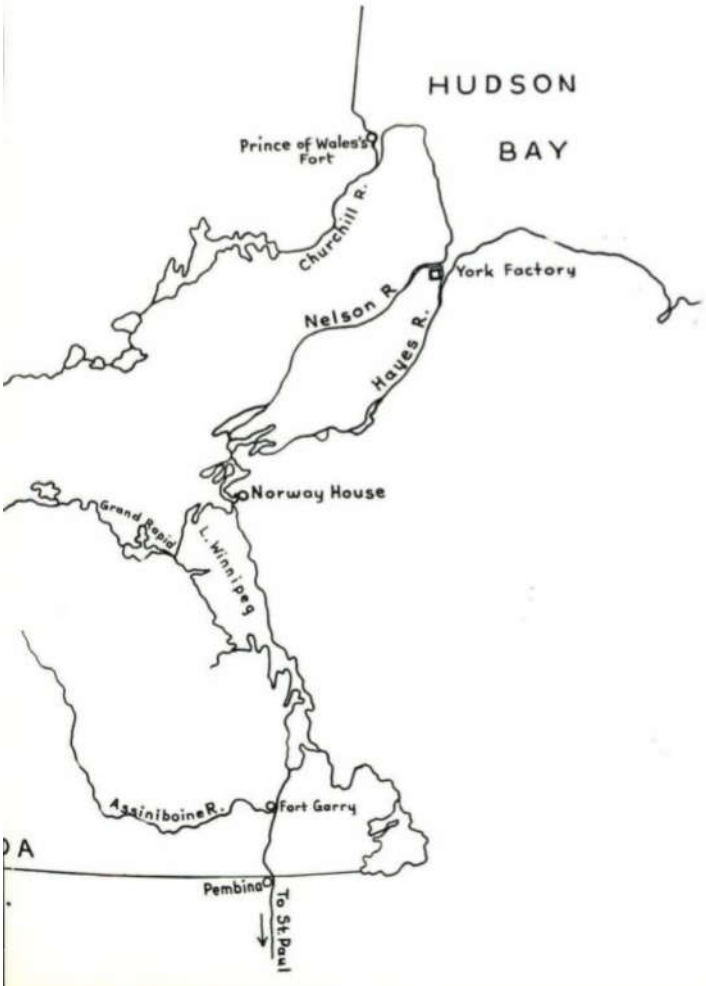


Above: Red River cart brigades like this one linked railway and steamboat between St. Paul and Fort Garry. Leonard Reid





Below: Transportation routes referred to in this article are shown on this map. Another route (not shown) linked the Saskatchewan with the Churchill.



River. Each year, a larger portion of the Red River indent was sent via St. Paul. Then the Saskatchewan District indent was added and, by 1861, Swan River as well. In the opinion of the Governor and Committee, the Minnesota route was "completely established." Now instead of one depot for the Northern Department, there were two. Unable to match her rival in supplying the southern districts, the Queen of the Bay had been forced to divide her realm.

The promise of the Minnesota route was not entirely fulfilled in the 1860s. It was as if an evil spell had been cast over the system. The Sioux Wars of Minnesota broke out in the fall of 1862 and instantly severed all communication lines between St. Paul and Fort Garry. With peaceful assurances from the Sioux, the Company managed to re-open the route in the following summer, intending to cart goods with its own men from St. Paul to the Red River. But the river was less responsive than the Indians. Its waters fell to an unnavigable depth and remained there for several years. A new steamboat, just christened the year before, was unable to ply the Red with regularity until 1869; and the Company had to extend its carting operations over the entire distance. There seemed no limit to the problems of the Minnesota route. The American Civil War, with its manpower shortage and its curtailed transportation, held up shipments. Customs officials at Port Huron on the St. Clair River and at Milwaukee were annoyingly uncooperative, impounding returns and detaining outfits. And amidst these crises, the Company's American partners and agents helped not at all. Some of them worked hard for the Company's competitors and all of them were notoriously inefficient. It was a bad era for the Minnesota route—but for the York route, it was even worse.

During this decade, it became apparent to the Company that York's ills were terminal. An abiding fault in the system lay in its use of brigades. In 1863, a Red River brigade bound for York broke down at Norway House, a victim both of epidemic and mismanagement. In 1865, all the Mackenzie River brigades failed. Of the four involved, one got lost en route to Norway House. The others arrived at Norway House but then mutinied and refused to proceed to York with their furs. Confronted with a like situation in 1853, the Company's officer at Norway House had seized the ringleaders and remanded them to Red River—and "some weeks" in prison. But 1853 was not 1865, when "none but the scum of the population" would work the York boats and there was not enough of that to go around. Because of the brigades, York Factory declined; and with each downward step, Fort Garry rose higher. In 1867, it added Athabasca's outfit to its shipments; and in the next

S.S. "Colvile" wooding up at Warren's Landing on the way from Lower Fort Garry to Norway House in 1881. From the photo by F. Jay Haynes of Fargo, Dakota Territory. Loudon Wilson

year, assumed the burden of exporting the returns of the Athabasca and Mackenzie River districts.

The Governor and Committee determined "to take measures which will make the services of the tripmen less necessary and enable the Company to be independent of them." The solution seemed to be steam power; but in this matter as in most, the policy was to make haste slowly. In 1869, London sent out a small steamer to work the rivers above York. Like the Winter Road, it also failed. Man cannot easily fashion highways or waterways from the rocks, rivers, and marshes of the Canadian Shield. Greater attention was given to navigation on Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan River, larger and more promising waters than the Hayes and its tributaries. Moreover, they could be easily entwined with railroads south of the 49th parallel.

In the post-Civil War era, Minnesota's railways had grown at a fantastic rate. St. Paul was tied to Chicago shortly after the end of the Civil War. In 1866, the St. Paul and Pacific pushed its branch line to St. Cloud; while its main line raced westward with the Northern Pacific. It was a dead heat; both lines hit the Red River in 1871. And plans were already under way for the St. Paul's branch line to extend to the Red and then work northward to St. Vincent on the international border.

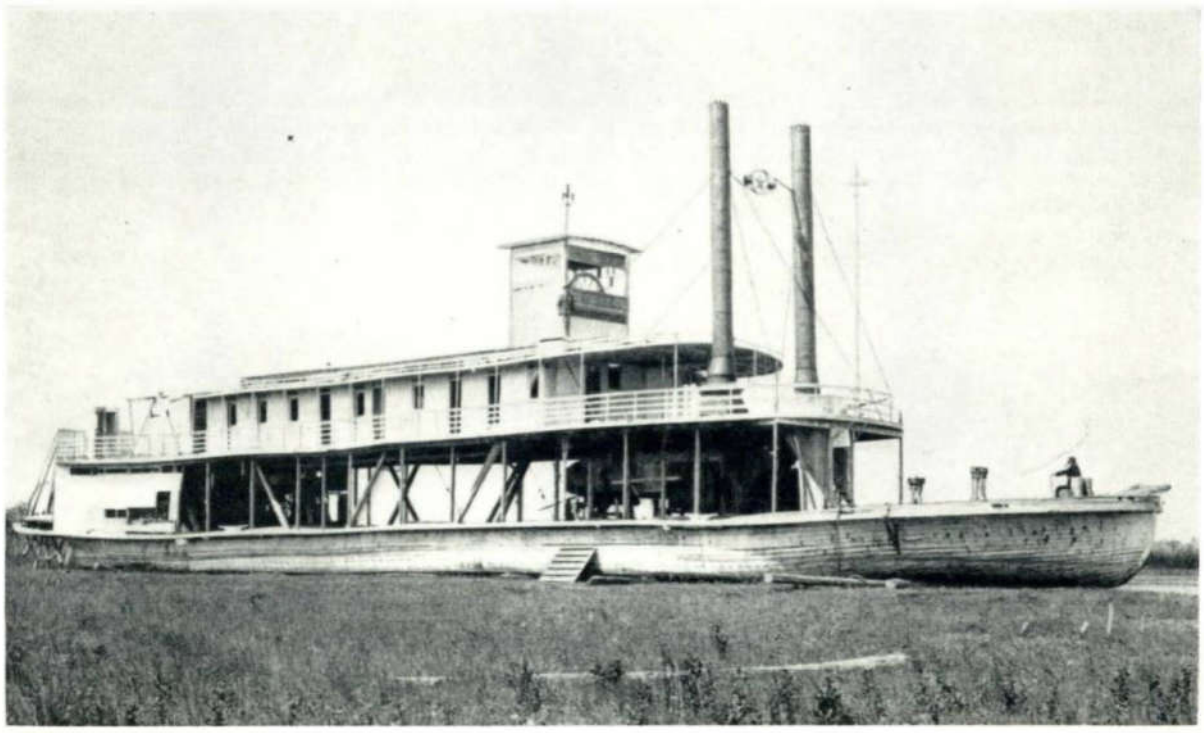
In addressing the Company's shareholders in June, 1871, Governor Sir Stafford H. Northcote projected a new policy for the Northern Department. Instead of sending goods by sea to York he contemplated using North America's "nearly completed railway system" which would give the Company a "very much shorter route." To replace the brigades, he considered employing steamers, far faster and more certain vehicles than the clumsy York boats. The key to a successful change-over, as Northcote well knew, was the steamboat, for the railroads had already proved themselves. In November, he announced to the stockholders that steamers had been ordered for use on Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan.

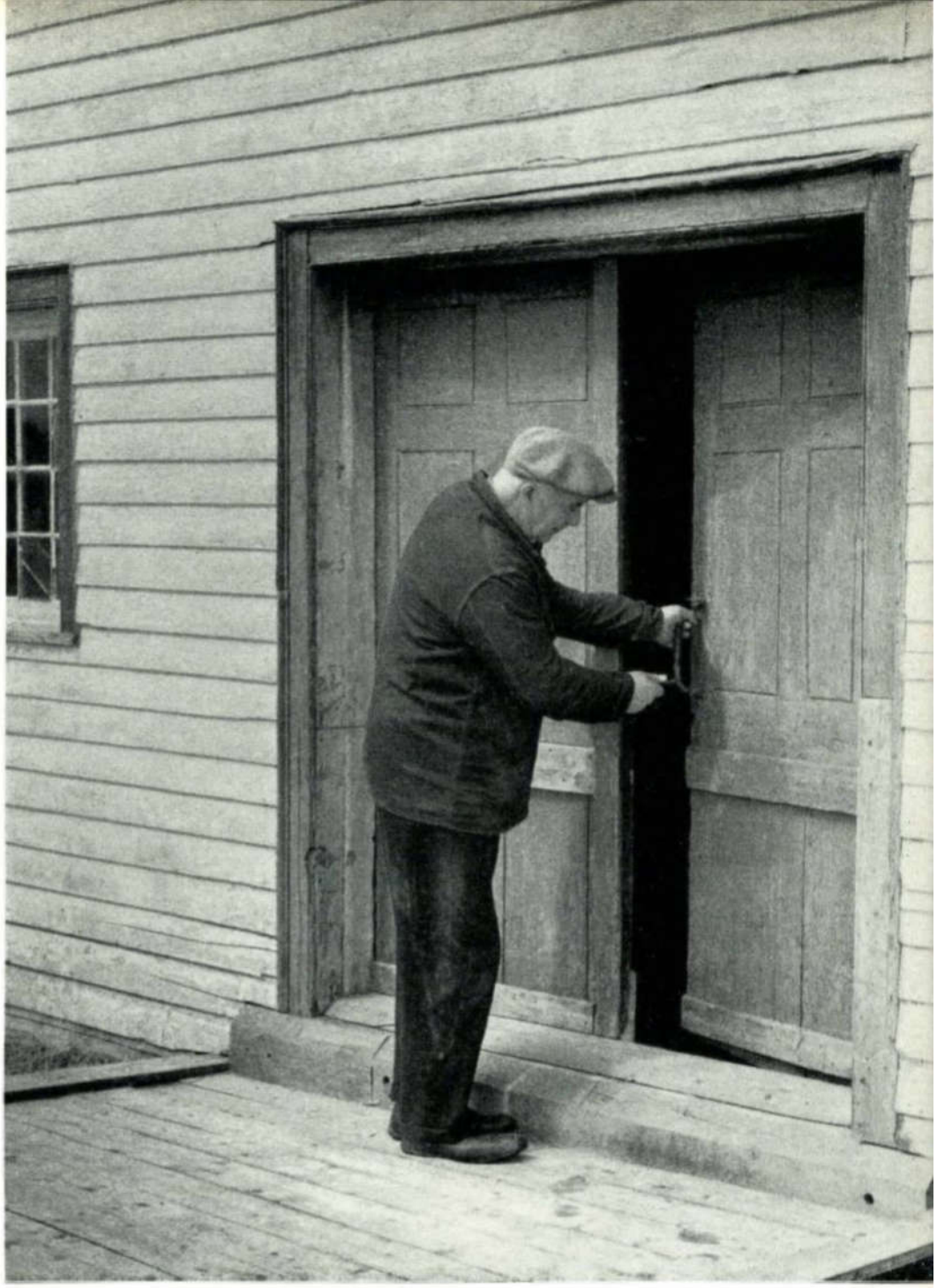
The Company launched the first steamer, the *Chief Commissioner*, in the summer of 1872 and the second, an unnamed vessel, in the year following. But the latter met with disaster. In endeavoring to get her around the Saskatchewan's rapids and up river where she was to ply, the crew stranded and wrecked her. Fortunately, all was not lost. The engine and machinery were saved and incorporated into the hull of a second boat, the *Northcote*. The *Northcote's* maiden voyage was a success. She steamed five hundred miles upstream to Carlton House in the summer of 1874 and doubled the distance to Edmonton in the next year. The Company had cut a new pattern of transportation: by rail to Red River; by steam (in two stages) from Fort Garry to Norway House to Grand Rapid; and, finally, by steam again to Edmonton. Steam navigation had not provided the Company with a foolproof system of transportation. Fitting a river or lake with an appropriate vessel often demanded further modifications in draught, power, and materials; but experimentation or not, steam was there to stay. The Northern Department had been relieved of the greater part of its troublesome brigades—and York Factory of her crown.

Even as the experiment in steam was underway, the Company was making preparations to reduce York Factory. Within a period of three years, it had been stripped of most of its remaining functions. In 1872, the year in which the dismantling began, the Company put a new man, Chief Trader Fortescue, in charge of the factory. He found it in a dilapidated state—every dwelling in need of floors and foundations—and the ovens in ruins—but there was little he could do about it at the time. The Company was more interested in cutting maintenance costs than in paying for repairs. When he assumed the post, York made up the accounts of the Northern Department; but in the same year, they were shifted to Fort Garry. The Company ignored Fortescue's personnel problems. The number of men given him each year was always small and frequently undetermined till late in the season. When he asked for more men from London, the Chief Commissioner refused, citing the need to reduce York's complement to the "lowest possible standard" and remarking that in the future, recruits would come via Fort Garry, not Hudson Bay.

The last season of any importance for York Factory was the summer of 1873. In that year, it received most of the outfits for the districts north of Oxford House and remitted to London a very considerable portion of the department's returns. York was living on borrowed time. Had the steamers proved themselves, this final flurry would never have occurred. In 1874 with both vessels in operation, York's activities were greatly reduced; and thereafter it handled only the outfits and returns for itself and the coastal posts. That summer, Fortescue virtually completed the reduction of York. He sent his overstock of trading goods to Norway House and ultimate transfer to Fort Garry's account. The York brigades had made their final trip to Norway House. In 1875, Fort Garry received all the outfits for the interior districts and managed all their returns. To York, was left itself—and a rather uncertain suzerainty over the coastal posts. ◆

S.S. "Northcote," first successful steamer on the Saskatchewan, beached at Cumberland House. Photo by J. B. Tyrrell, 1894.





The last in the long line of York Factory factors, A. B. McIvor, locks the main door of the depot for the last time. "The door closed, and a page of history opened."
G. A. Beare

The End Comes . . . .

BY MALVINA BOLUS

Miss Bolus is assistant editor of the "Beaver"

WHEN I flew in to York Factory one evening in June to see the old post closed I thought this was going to be a sad story. The end of a once-thriving port vital in the life of a new country would be full of nostalgia and sorrow.

I was wrong in two ways. Though the ice of Hudson Bay gleamed in the distance I had not realized that the heart of Rupert's Land lay so far north. What I thought of as evening was day and when a blazing tawny full moon rose slowly above the spruce trees across the Hayes River facing the great depot, the rosy glow of sunset warmed the clear blue sky behind the building.

As for the huge factory—solid and four-square it stood, its work accomplished, its purpose fulfilled, ready to carry on or ready to stand proudly alone, undisturbed by fretful man.

Thick nail-studded doors with elaborate wrought-iron hinges and heavy iron latches opened in to the depot. Inside were vast halls, with many-paned windows lighting the enormous beams of the ceilings. I went upstairs, worn stairs, the handrail polished by the grip of many fingers. Inner windows looked across the square court to the back of the building, and snow buntings twinkled in the sheltered well. The walls of the hall, lined with satiny old spruce, glowed golden in the soft light and one was filled with a sensation of warm and mellow beauty, great strength, and peace.

The biggest hall extends the full length of the back of the building on the second floor. More than a hundred feet long and about twenty-six wide, it is bright with thirteen windows to the west, more at either end, and yet more on the inner wall. Proportionately high, great square-hewn beams span the hall, strengthened by huge knees in the manner of ship-building. Trees to provide such timbers do not grow locally, for the marshy wind-swept ground supports only stunted willows and larch with a few straggling spruce. The wood for the building was felled up the rivers, floated down and hauled up the thirty- or forty-foot bank to be shaped and set, just as it had been in the days of Henry Kelsey and Joseph Colen.

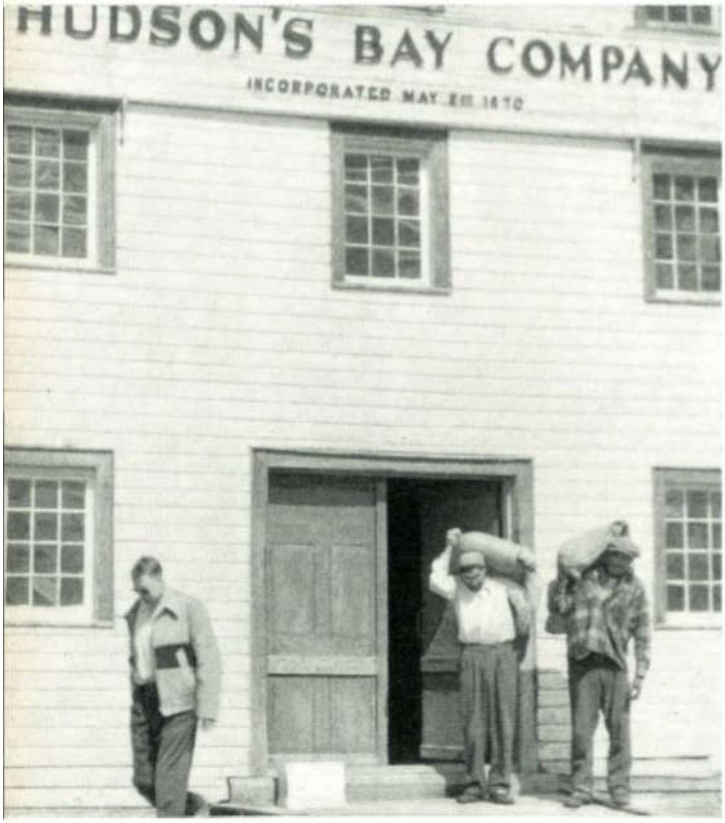
From the hexagonal lookout which tops the depot there is nothing to break the view. To the north there is a glimpse of the remains of the massive stone powder house that was destroyed by lightning, a few Indian houses on the river bank, and the muskeg stretching to the Bay where ice glimmers against the Point of Marsh or shifts out to sea with a change in the wind. The scene, in fact, must be little changed from the day when John Abraham built the first York Fort, somewhere along this shoreline. Much later, eager eyes must have watched from this window for ships entering the treacherous Hayes River with people, supplies, and mail for the factory. To the west, an unbroken expanse of marsh and scrub growth to the Nelson River—two hours winter travel away—where, 175 years ago, La Pérouse's men hacked their way through the bush to besiege and take York Factory. Southwards, about a mile away, the white and green Anglican church stands out sharply, beyond it the straggling settlement of Indian houses. On the east flows the silty river with its islands and sandbars and in from the far shore the edge of the spruce forest pricks the skyline. All about is silence, save for the distant wail of Indian dogs from the village.

The Indians, of course, knew that York Factory had reached the end of its days. Just a year ago the tall flagpole between the depot and the river hard by the sole remaining cannon had been struck by lightning. The top of the pole was ripped off and flung to the ground. A few weeks later the upper part of the pole was splintered by another lightning stroke. The voice of doom had been confirmed. Though electrical storms are fairly common in these parts and flame may be seen running through the houses there is seldom any resultant damage, the destruction of the disused powder magazine a generation ago being one of the exceptions.

This was good trapping country, and only twenty years ago six or seven hundred Crees would trade at the post with their catches of mink, otter, ermine, fox (white and coloured), beaver, and muskrat. Fishing was not very good, but it was adequate for an occasional change of diet and for dog food, and sometimes the belugas (white whales) would come up the river, or there was a polar bear to be taken. Moose and caribou were plentiful. Lately there has been little trapping—furs bring poor returns—the fish have gone, few caribou travel this way—a drying head and few sets of antlers on a cache were the only evidence—and there are not many moose. Only one young hunter had done well the past winter; he had taken three moose. The pale hides, cleaned and scraped, were hanging from the rafters of his house, not yet smoked to the brown colour they would have when made into moccasins and jackets.

Now there were only sixty or seventy Crees in the settlement. They had been drifting away for several seasons, some to work at posts on the railway line, some on defence construction, or at Churchill; others to new trapping grounds or different reserves. The chief, William Beardy, had left last summer and one of the councillors, John Beardy, who helped to board up the windows of the old depot, was the acting chief. The few remaining natives were being moved to the reservation at Split Lake.

The village, like most others, straggles along the river bank for about a mile on either side of the H B C post.



The Last two bales of merchandise are taken out from the great building which used to hold two years' outfits of trade goods for the whole Northern Department. M. Bolus

The larger settlement, to the south, is reached by a narrow, rotted, log and plank walk across swamp and gully, through a dwarf forest of six-foot willow and tamarack.

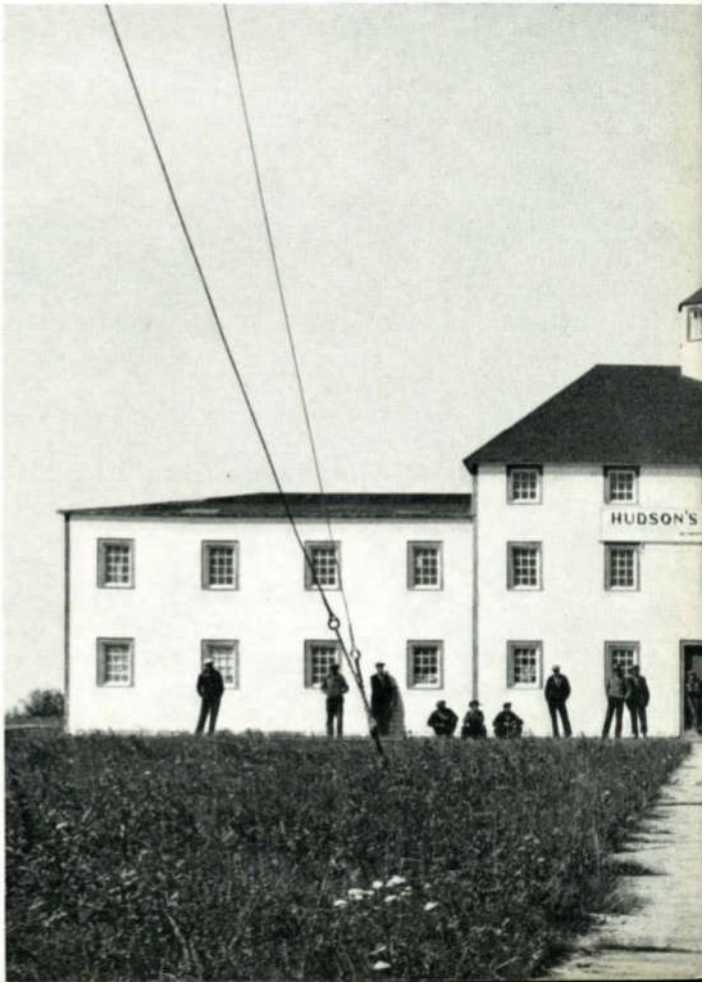
Squelching away from the post downstream, one comes to another board walk and crosses a deep cleft spanned by a good bridge. On its far side, on the highest land, is the little cemetery, round the broken thirty-inch walls of the powder house. The cemetery is gently sliding away and the fences round the graves, once painted in blues and greens and white now weathered a silvery grey, topple in the soft muskeg. Such graves as have headstones date from the 1860s, though a large stone almost buried in the ground commemorates Joseph Charles, a native of Hudson Bay who died on May 27, 1836. The older cemetery farther north has been washed away by the river. The only iron-railed grave is that of Chief Factor James Sinclair. An impressive granite headstone is inscribed to "William Wastesecoot, a great hunter for 60 years. He paid his last debt in 1901. He spoke the truth and was held in esteem by all officers he worked for. This stone is placed on his grave by one of them."

Right: The depot, in the form of an open square, 100 by 105 feet, was erected in the 1830s and 1840s. The last remaining building of the factory, it now stands boarded up and empty. A. B. McIvor

Everywhere about the Factory, which once had so many buildings and so many people, there are relics to be found for the looking. Foundations of buildings, stumps of pickets, crumbled boardwalks, bricks, bits of iron, can be felt beneath the muskeg and easily uncovered. Broken pieces of a gun carriage lie by a creek; the silt of the foreshore reveals bits of the dock that once stood below the bank, ships' timbers and ironwork—and almost anywhere there are cannon balls. There they will remain, perhaps seen now for the last time before they sink out of sight.

There were so many last things about those June days at York Factory. The last visits of the young nurse who cared for the Indians—trudging along the dipping pathways, calling in overheated homes, taking temperatures, sticking needles in brown babies. The last dealings in the store whose shelves were growing bare, where the men would gather to chat in their soft Cree speech with the last post manager, big and friendly, who spoke Cree as well as they did.

The last service in the neat white church which boasts stained glass in one of its windows. The villagers sitting outside in the sun while the children played and music from the organ drifted out, until the bell called the flock in. The long prayers in the melodious Cree voices, the



vigour of the singing, the blessing asked by the native lay reader made a deep impression.

Then there was the last canoe brigade to leave the Factory—only five canoes, two men to each, with outboards to speed them up river to the post at Shamattawa. (How different from the old days, when scores of birch-barks would set out up that same stretch of river for the far west, laden with goods from 18th-century London, and paddled by painted and befeathered Indians!) It would take these big canvas freighters three or four days up the Hayes and God's Rivers to reach the post, with supplies no longer needed at York. The last heavy goods would go by the scow, poled and tracked up the rapids by its crew of eight as in the old days. Much of the freight had already been moved by the Company's small aeroplane. When the Bay was open, a ship would make its last call to pick up boxes destined for the south.

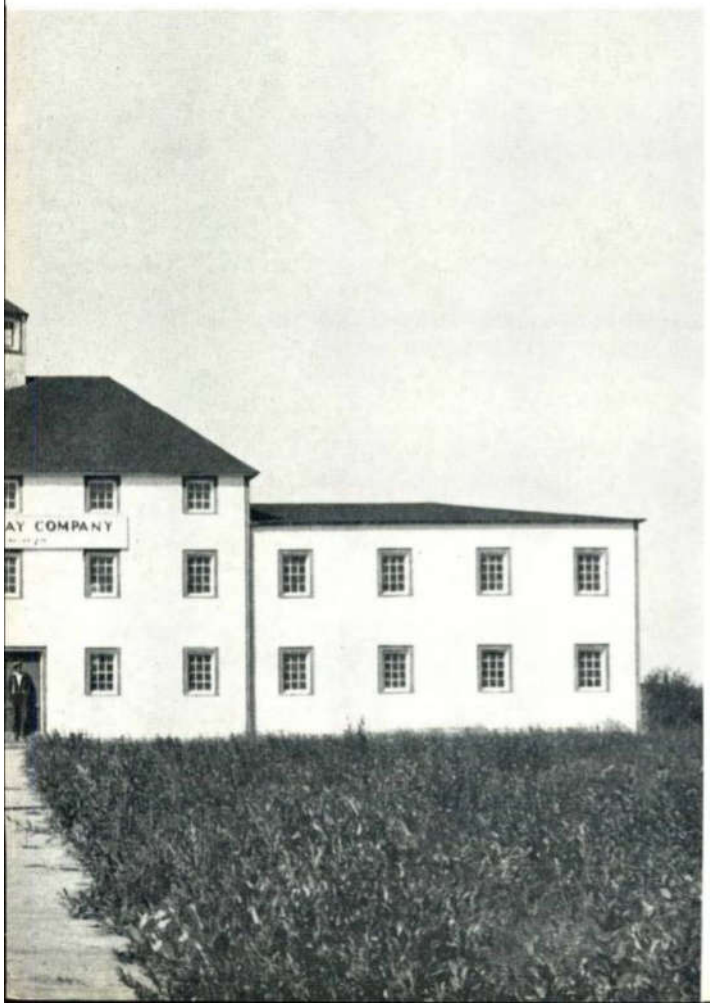
The last look and the last load. The bronze plaque marking an historic site had been fastened to the bolted door. In the big canoe were some mixed supplies, the last furs of the old YF mark, and the passenger. The furs were meagre bales that needed no pressing—some otter and beaver in the larger of the firmly sewn hessian bundles, some mink in the smaller.

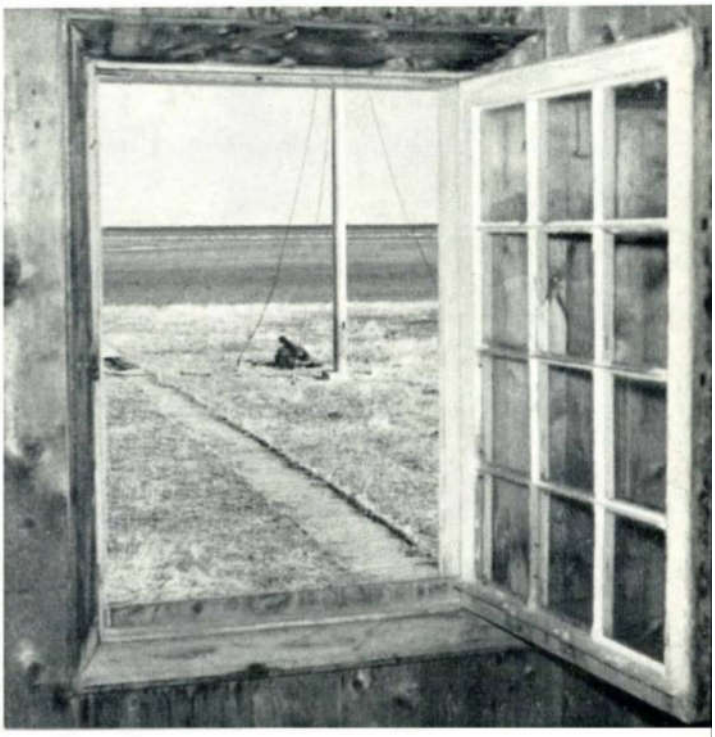
The Indians paddled out to the scow in the Hayes to which boats or planes tied up, for the river is treacherous with sandbars and rocks, a swift current and tidal waters. The plane took on gas from the drums on the scow. The load was put in—oil, furs, the precious mail—and the line cast off.

As the plane lifted the storm presaged by the sun ring two days before rolled in from the Bay. Cloud hid the mouth of the river and the shifting ice beyond; it swept towards the large square building as if to hasten its retreat from the activities of man, for nature was waiting to take over, cutting back the river bank with churning ice in the spring, blasting with gales, sucking down into the oozing muskeg.

Who could tell how long it would be before the work of man, after 275 years, would be only torn fragments peering from the river bank or drowned timbers revealed by moss-grown streaks across the ground? Or would lightning strike again and end the story quickly in a crackling blaze? The foxes would creep nearer and in winter the white bears might come snuffling round to see what was there.

A flight of Canada geese winged across the sky. The mist swept in and the wind tore at the walls, but the Factory stood staunch and proud as we dipped in last salute. ◆





The Hayes River, the last cannon, and the lightning-shattered flagstaff seen through an upstairs window.
A. B. McIvor

Rev. R. Faries (now Archdeacon) reading in the library at York Factory, in 1910. Photo by A. V. Thomas in the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

Books of the North

OLD BOOKS

THE reading habits of York Factory fur traders cannot be accurately gauged by the books found on the shelves there; but a certain amount of light is thrown on personal interests and preferences by glancing through the collection of volumes in Hudson's Bay House which once formed part of the York Factory library. Studying a cross section of these, picked out at random, one is struck first by the number of old books in or about French and Latin. Joshua Halcro—who incidentally never lived at York but served with the XY and North West Companies before joining the H B C—signed his name in 1824 (the year he left Rupert's Land for England) in two books, an 18th century life of Pliny the Younger, in Latin, and a Latin text-book, printed at Eton in 1805, and "Adapted to the Use of Youth, of the lower Class."

Augustus Peers—he whose funeral journey by dog-train up the frozen Mackenzie gave rise to one of the North's best ghost stories—wrote his name and the date 1841 in

Exercises upon the French Language and in *Introduction au Lecteur Français*, edited by L. Murray, 1833. While William Ross owned a *Grammar of the French Tongue* printed in Montreal, 1812, by Nahum Mower, founder of the *Montreal Herald*. Two other books in Latin are Livy's Second Punic War, and Sallust's *Belli Catilinarii et Jugurthini Historiae*, 1796, both edited by "Joannus" Hunter, and the latter owned by Charles Ross, later first factor at Fort Victoria.

Oldest volumes found in the collection are a set of the *Works of Mr. de Molière*, 1714 (the year Knight took over the Bay posts from the French). A copy of Voltaire's *Universal History* printed in 1759 bears the autograph of John Dickson, 1779. But the most autographed books of all are a set of *Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, etc.*, translated from the French of "Mr. Rollin," illustrated with copper plates, and published in 1774. One volume bears the signature of Robert Henry, at Rat River (possibly the one north of Cumberland House), 1793; of A. Henry, who may be Alexander Henry the Younger; and of Peter Fidler, the surveyor, in whose extensive library it found a home before ending up on the shelves at York.

Other famous fur trade names are to be found in the *History of Miranda's Attempt to Effect a Revolution in South America*, published in Boston, 1808, and given by George Moffatt, of Montreal, to the dissenting Nor'wester Dr. John McLoughlin whom he put in touch with Andrew Colvile of the H B C shortly before the union of the two companies.

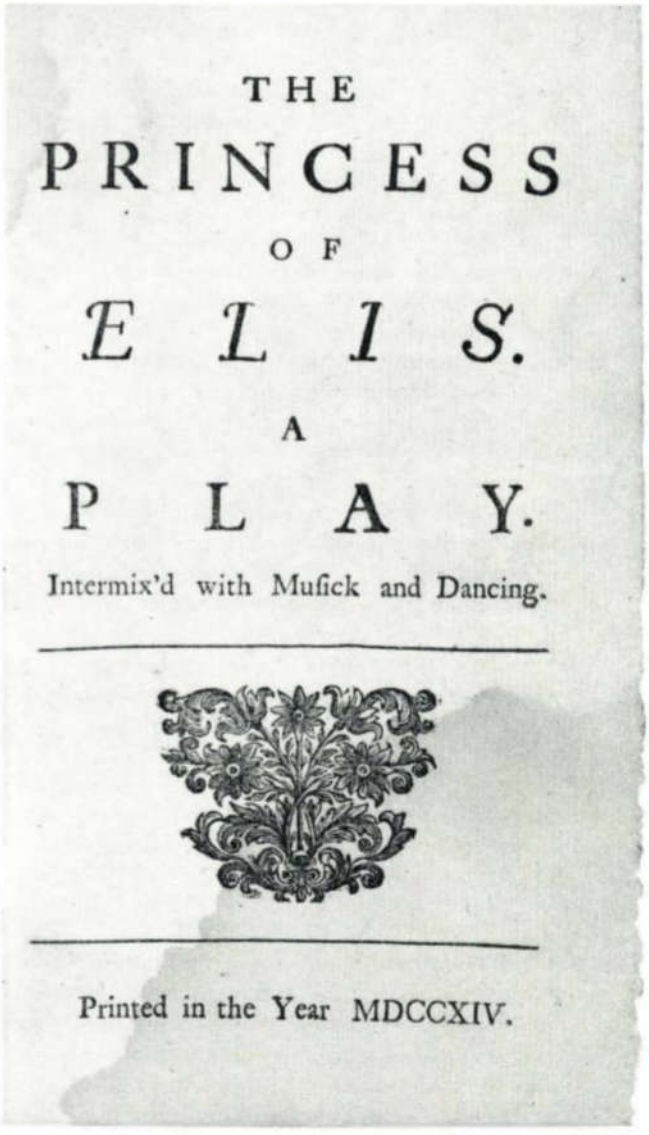
There are a number of religious works, among them Blair's *Sermons*, and a five-volume set, *Theology Explained and Defended*, by Timothy Dwight, "late President of Yale College," published in 1824 and owned by Thomas Smith in 1828. Rev. W. W. Kirkby of Mackenzie River connections later owned it and left it at York.

Victorian novels are represented by a first edition of Thackeray's *Newcomes* (1854) bearing his early pen-name, Arthur Pendennis; by an early edition (1858) of his *Virginians* illustrated by the author, and a first edition of George Eliot's *Silas Marner* (1861). Verse includes an 1819 edition of Shakespeare's plays and the *Works of Lord Byron*, both owned by James Hargrave; and in lighter vein, *Bret Harte's Works*. Canadiana is represented only by three books of Judge Haliburton's—*The Clockmaker* 1862, *The Old Judge*, and *Sam Slick in England*, 1863.

Bound numbers of magazines took up a good deal of room on the Factory shelves. *The Cornhill Magazine* was one of these, *Punch* from 1858 to 1867, and especially the weeklies "Conducted by Charles Dickens": *Household Words* from February 1855 to May 1859, succeeded by *All the Year Round* to March 1885. It was in the initial issue of the latter magazine that *The Tale of Two Cities* first saw the light of day.

This sampling of York Factory reading matter suggests that the fur traders of the 18th and 19th centuries read some pretty substantial stuff. But they were substantial men, for whom life was a serious, and seldom a frivolous, affair. Only one bit of trivia was noticed among the volumes —a small book of parlour games of 1851 entitled *Family Pastime or Homes Made Happy*. ◆

Title page of the first play in volume III of the "Works of Mr. de Moliere" published in 1714. From the York Factory library.


THE
PRINCESS
OF
ELIS.
A
PLAY.
Intermix'd with Muſick and Dancing.
Printed in the Year MDCCXIV.

NEW BOOKS

THE GREAT MIGRATIONS, by Georges Blond. Translated by Frances Frenaye. The Macmillan Company, 1956. 192 pages. $4.00.

Reviewed by R. W. Sutton

IN HIS introduction the author deliberately makes it clear that his material is gleaned from naturalists' notebooks, and frankly states, "I proceeded to treat the material not as a scientist but as a writer." The naturalist-critic thus finds himself forestalled at the outset!

True to its title, this book deals with what we have come to know as the "Great Migrations"—those of the salmon, eels, lemmings, locusts, and certain birds. It deals also with migrations that are less popularly recognized, such as the spawning journeys of the herring and grunion. I have some doubt as to the wisdom of including our buffalo as great migrants. Somewhere a line must be drawn between the incredible journeys of such spectacular migrants as birds, and the very limited journeys of earth-bound mammals in moving from winter to summer range. I feel the line should have fenced out the buffalo. However impressive he may have been in size and in numbers, his migration in terms of distance and orientation hardly belongs amongst the "greats." It's to be noted, moreover, that he does not deal with the equally impressive seasonal movements of the caribou.

Though the author gives in popular style current theories on the migration impulse, this book is not intended to discuss migration in scientific terms. Rather, it is written to impress us with the irresistible power of the urge to migrate. To this end the author uses a strong dramatic style and, by his admission, a pronounced anthropomorphic viewpoint. He is entirely successful and the book makes excellent reading.

THE CANADIAN OXFORD DESK ATLAS OF THE WORLD. Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1957. $3.95.

Reviewed by Malvina Bolus

THIS is a small atlas, 8 by 10 inches, and half an inch thick, with excellent coverage. It is directed to the Canadian user, with nearly half the maps given to the Americas, mostly Canada. Though the size of the book is small, the maps are as large as those in many bigger volumes, since margins have been eliminated. This makes a pleasing page and the physical maps are particularly effective with their new technique of shading and colour.

The maps of the Canadian provinces include such data as area, with types of land, population, including census returns from 1871 to 1956, and production, divided into construction and primary products, manufactures, and minerals. There is a section about the St. Lawrence Seaway, and the maps of eastern Canada name counties. Despite this, the maps are remarkably uncluttered. This is achieved, in part, by including minor features in the gazetteer with a reference to the nearest latitude and longitude and not marking them on the maps. For instance, Moosonee is shown on the map, whereas Moose Factory is only listed. The gazetteer for Canada is separated from that of the rest of the world, which is treated in less detail.

Separate maps show clearly and simply vegetation, climatic regions, soils, geology, industries. The one showing communications in Canada by railways, ports, airports, and roads where there is no other means, even indicates ice conditions. An unusual feature, with more meaning for the layman than geological maps, are those labelled "build," showing sedimentary layers, folded mountains, volcanic plateaux and so on.

Different projections are used in different maps, but a note points out where distortion is marked or a section of ocean has been omitted. Altogether a very useful handy atlas and excellent value for its moderate price.

GUNS ON THE EARLY FRONTIERS, a history of firearms from colonial times through the years of the western fur trade, by Carl P. Russell, University of California Press, 1957. 395 pages. $8.50.

Reviewed by S. J. Gooding

THE AUTHOR of this handsome book begins his work with the coming of the white man to North America, and follows his migration westward until the middle of the 19th century. The first chapter, "Arming the American Indian," is divided into sections on the trade guns sold by the French, Dutch, Swedes, Spanish, English and Americans. Succeeding chapters to a certain extent follow these divisions. They are: Personal Weapons of the Traders and Trappers; Trade Muskets and Rifles supplied to

Mr. Sutton is director of the Manitoba Museum.

Miss Bolus, of the "Beaver," was formerly assistant editor of the "Canadian Geographical Journal."

Mr. Gooding of the Royal Ontario Museum is an authority on early firearms.

the Indians; Military Arms of the Fur Trade Period; Powder, Ball and Accessories; and Small Cannon of the Traders and the Military.

It is in the section dealing with the late 18th and early 19th century that the author comes into his own. In "Personal Weapons of the Traders and Trappers" he presents information indicating that most newly designed firearms were available on the frontier almost as soon as they were in the east. Of particular value are the detailed descriptions of some of the trade guns manufactured expressly for the Hudson's Bay Company, the American Fur Company, the North West Company and the Indian Departments of both Great Britain and the United States. Considerable information is given on the arms of such famous makers as Barnett, Bond, W. Chance & Son, Leman, Sargent Brothers, Whately, and J. Hollis & Son.

Guns on the Early Frontiers covers a very wide range in both space and time. The author has brought together a great deal of information into 282 pages of text and 57 pages of footnotes. His work is well documented, although some of the sources are open to question in the light of more recent data. Much of his material has never before been covered. It is all valuable to those interested in the minutiae of our early history. But when working in an unexplored field errors are bound to appear. Mr. Russell has a number of these in his book, but only one need be mentioned here. Speaking of trade guns sold by the Hudson's Bay Company, he notes that they were made in lengths of 3, 3½ and 4 feet, but he erroneously states that this was the over-all length. It was in fact the length of the barrel.

FREMONT: PATHMARKER OF THE WEST, by Allan Nevins. Longmans, Green and Co. 689 pages, maps, illustrations. $10.00.

Reviewed by Lancaster Pollard

NATURALLY, not many pages in Professor Nevins' authoritative and full-length biography of John Charles Frémont are pertinent to the history of the "Old Oregon Country;" and even what is pertinent of the pathmarker's activity was not of much importance—except to Frémont. His reports of the expeditions of 1842 and 1843 (Chapters VII-X) won him international fame: among other honours, he was presented with a medal by the Royal Geographical Society. The reports were the initial accomplishments that launched him on political, military and business careers which all began brilliantly and ended disastrously.

Mr. Pollard, formerly superintendent of the Oregon Historical Society, is now free-lancing in Portland.

Frémont was not an explorer in the true sense of the word; he was, as the subtitle of the book states, a "pathmarker." Traders and trappers of the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies had for thirty years been familiar with the areas he traversed in his first and second expeditions. The fur hunters, Nevins writes, were "masters of topography, veritable walking maps." Except for David Thompson they were not cartographers and did not advertise their knowledge—Thompson's great achievements were not generally known, and then not in detail, until 1897. Frémont was an able cartographer and geographer, and the reports of his expeditions were published within one or two years after the completion of his expeditions.

He did survey the route of the Oregon Trail, locating camp sites where water and grass were available, and offering good advice to American immigrants bound for the then jointly occupied Old Oregon country. The irony is that his work was unnecessary. The "great migration" of Americans into the Columbia-Willamette district was under way the same year his first report was published, and was not influenced by it. Nevins admits that "already the tide of westward colonization [from the States] was flowing strongly."

The author handles the tremendous amount of confused and contradictory material with discrimination and admirable impartiality, and presents his story with exceptional literary skill.

PAGEANT OF THE NORTH, a Photographic Adventure into Canada's Northland, edited by Clifford Wilson. Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1957. 175 pages. $5.50.

Reviewed by George M. Douglas

PAGEANT OF THE NORTH"—a happy idea indeed, carried out admirably by its editor, is a comprehensive and vivid portrayal of the country in all its forms and various activities; of the seasons; of its human dwellers; white, Indian, and Eskimo, and their lives; its wild life of birds, fishes and mammals. The Hudson's Bay Company's *Beaver*, from which these pictures are reprinted, is unique among magazines for the vast collection it can draw from, and the pre-eminent skill of the photographers who have contributed to that collection.

The arrangement of the pictures dealing with the various subjects has been done with conspicuous success. This is a book to arouse in those who do not know the country an ardent wish to visit it; and to the "old timers" exiled from it nostalgic longings for the "ampler day divinelier

Mr. Douglas, author of "Lands Forlorn," knows the North well and is himself a skilful photographer.

lit" of the Far North and the scented air of the Barrens in early summer. Various factors contribute to success in photography. Infinite patience in the case of animals and birds; in this class those taken by Lorene Squire are notable, and there are many in this collection of equal merit, such as the "Nesting Willow Grouse" by Montgomery. Or it may be the luck of time and chance presenting an opportunity for an alert photographer with a ready camera. The polar bear landing on an ice floe with the water dripping from its fur, or Banfield's herd of caribou stalked by a lone wolf. Or Webster's picture of a dog team skirting a pressure ridge, a lovely winter picture, comparable in artistic merit to Claude Monet's famous winter scene, "The Magpie."

Of scenery the photo of the Virginia Falls on the South Nahanni River is a fine example of the wild and dramatic, while "Hudson Straits" reflects ineffable peace. The studies of human inhabitants, whether white or native, have been done with great success. "Northern Man" by R. N. Hourde is a fine study of the recent "Newcomer" and Bob Stewart's "Primitive Man" equally good of the Eskimos of a generation ago. The "close-up" should obey the same rules as Gilbert's "Thrill of the touch" which

> Means little, or nothing, or much.
> 'Tis an instrument rare
> To be handled with care
> And it ought to be treated as such.

Your reviewer is no addict to the close-up of some modern photographers. They remind him too forcibly of the close-up of the old movie days, usually of the heroine with (glycerine) tears of anguish slowly rolling down her cheek. This sledge hammer treatment of driving a point home has fortunately passed from movie practice. "Tailors and writers must mind the fashion"—and no less photographers.

Pageant of the North is indeed a wonderful collection of pictures of the Far North in all its phases—a collection which it is hard to praise too highly—and I hope this brief review will induce many to see and judge for themselves.

ARCTIC BIRDS OF CANADA, by L. L. Snyder, Illustrated by T. M. Shortt, University of Toronto Press. 310 pages. $4.75.

Reviewed by Clarence Tillenius

THE true bird-watcher—be he veteran ornithologist or downiest neophyte—can no more resist the magic words "new bird book" than moth can resist the candle. Happily analogy stops there. The light emanating from the source of attraction here illuminates rather than destroys. At any rate, a new bird book is an event, and since literature on arctic birds is not superabundant, bird students will welcome Mr. Snyder's book.

The author, curator of ornithology at the Royal Ontario Museum, carefully defines area, scope and purpose. It is, he states, a guide to study of birds native to the Canadian Arctic—for the purpose of the study, here defined as "an area with its southern perimeter a line running along the treeless coast of Yukon territory and Mackenzie District east to Bathurst Inlet, thence southeastward to Eskimo Point on Hudson Bay, across that bay to Portland Promontory on the east coast, thence eastward to Ungava Bay, and along its treeless coast to Cape Chidley." Actually, the book covers a much greater area.

Bird study begins with identification. Correct identification depends on how completely one can describe what one has seen. Good description includes the gross and the general, followed by details and particulars which sharpen the focus. In the introduction—which you should read—a glint of humour shows in Mr. Snyder's eye as he proffers a wittily-worded description of a spurred, western-hatted, levi-encased, bowlegged character sprinting down the streets of Calgary, leaving the reader to infer probable species and occupation of specimen described.

However, levity has scant place in the Arctic, grim land that it is even for its natives. Here, though, Mr. Snyder cautions against the assumption that arctic birds must be exceptionally hardy, pointing out that neither arctic birds nor Eskimos have a wider degree of tolerance but that both have been tempered by nature's relentless forces to exist in a cold climate. "No frills nor unessentials. Look elsewhere for crests, wattles, trains, spangles and protracted bizarre rituals. Plumage sedate, black and white basic, other colours at a minimum."

Nine orders of birds inhabit the Arctic. A key is given to simplify identification. Text descriptions are full and clear. Range maps with distribution and breeding areas pin-pointed for each species treated are an excellent feature. Eskimo names or the approximate English equivalent are given where known. It is not unheard of even with us that pronunciation varies with the individual . . . so there is really no discrepancy where on page 155 one reads: "Pectoral Sandpiper: Eskimo, Southampton Islands, Shushugneriak (probably a generalized name for small sandpipers)" . . . and then on page 158: "White-Rumped Sandpiper: Eskimo, Southampton Island, Shidgeriak (. . . probably a designation for small sandpipers in general)."

The book's value is enhanced by the carefully rendered black and white drawings, each bird set against characteristic terrain by artist Terence M. Shortt, himself a naturalist with first-hand knowledge of arctic bird-life.

Clarence Tillenius is well known to Beaver readers through his animal drawings and writings.

Winter Packet

J. B. Tyrrell

As the last issue of the *Beaver* was being printed, word came of the death of one of Canada's most distinguished citizens, Joseph Burr Tyrrell, famed for decades as a geologist, explorer, and historian, when he was close to entering his 100th year.

One has only to recall certain events contemporary with his early years to realize what stirring times he lived through. He was born on November 1st, 1858—before the new colony of British Columbia was proclaimed. At that time, Captain Palliser was still carrying on his explorations in the West, and Hind and Dawson were just completing theirs. Eastern Canadians, after the report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons the previous year, were clamouring for admittance to the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company. Sir George Simpson was still making his annual journeys of inspection westward from Montreal. McClintock was still looking for traces of the lost Franklin Expedition. Canada consisted of only two provinces, and Confederation was nearly nine years away.

To epitomize an average man's life nearly a century long would be difficult in a note of this size; but to deal comprehensively with so active and important a life as Dr. Tyrrell's in such a space is obviously impossible. Reference might be made to D. M. LeBourdais' article on him in the *Beaver* of five years ago for the highlights of his career, starting in 1883 with his first geological field trip, when he worked as assistant to the celebrated Dr. George M. Dawson on a survey of the Rocky Mountains from the U.S. boundary to Kicking Horse Pass and the Bow River.

For the next three years he was in charge of a party making a geological exploration of Alberta from the Bow to the North Saskatchewan, and during that time he examined the coal seams near Drumheller—since exploited commercially—and not far away found and excavated the first dinosaur skull discovered in Canada. 1892 was spent exploring in what is now northern Saskatchewan, and 1893 in travelling with his brother James, largely through unmapped country, from Lake Athabasca to Churchill. It was at the start of this journey that he examined an oil seepage near Edmonton, and recommended exploration there, in a region that has since been proved rich in oil.

The following year he went from Cumberland House to Churchill via Reindeer Lake and the Kazan River, and as in the previous year travelled overland in the winter from Churchill to Winnipeg. In 1896 he explored some of the little-known country northwest of Lake Winnipeg up to Athapapuskow Lake, finding large areas of mineral-bearing rocks where the great mines of that area have since been developed.

From 1898 to 1904 his time was largely spent in mining activities in the Yukon, and in 1906 he opened an office in Toronto. In later life he was best known as president of the Kirkland Lake Gold Mining Co., whose mine in northern Ontario he was largely responsible for putting on a very profitable basis.

Being interested in northern travel, and knowing the North so well from his wide, first-hand experience, he undertook for the Champlain Society the editing of Hearne's Northern Journey, David Thompson's Narrative, Documents Relating to Hudson Bay, and the Journals of Hearne and Turnor. His honours included the Back Award of the Royal Geographical Society (1896), the Murchison and Wollaston Medals of the Geological Society, the Daly Medal of the American Geographical Society, and the Flavelle Medal of the Royal Society of Canada. Of him it can be said as truly as of any one, that he died full of years and honours. And with his going—remembering his experiences and his achievements in the North—one feels that an era has ended.

Fireman save my . . .

Until this fall a log hotel, described by people who should know as a gem of rustic architecture, welcomed travellers to Hudson's Hope, B.C., on the Peace River. The French millionaire, Charles Bedaux, who headed the famous expedition of 1937, stayed there with his suite. Engineers for the Wenner-Gren corporation paused there on their way by helicopter to the Finlay River country. "Bigwigs of all kinds," to quote the *Alaska Highway News*, "judges and explorers, bush fliers and river boatmen, railway engineers, political leaders and magnates, patronized the Hudson's Hope Hotel." And most recently a party of TV men from CBC, Toronto, enjoyed its hospitality while they photographed it for a documentary film.

The building itself was excellently constructed, with beautifully fitted log corners, and with the walls of the

foyer faced with logs shaved down by the "Ollie" process, i.e., with large draw-knives pulled by horses. But before six on the morning of August 27, a fire started somewhere in the hotel, and the picturesque little building went up in flames and smoke. Eighteen tons of coal recently delivered added to the smoke.

But all was not lost! The day before, several cases of beer had been unloaded in the proper department, and through the valiant efforts of volunteer firemen from the King Gething and Tompkins mines, who formed a sort of bottle-brigade, the whole lot was saved for a better fate.

Lonely Hart

To H. C. Moir, H B C, Churchill, from Geo. R. Ray, H B C, York Factory.

Letter No. 729. Subject: Joe Hart. 2nd January 1914
Dear Sir: Joseph Hart wishes to marry Aggie Uazzie; if she is willing you might allow her to accompany the Churchill sleds.

To G. R. Ray, Gentleman in Charge, Nelson River District.
Churchill, Jan. 15, 1914.

Dear Sir: Aggie Uazzie refuses to marry Joseph Hart; she says he is too old and would not be able to perform a Husband's duties.

(*Sgd*) H. C. Moir

Three R's

Educating the child who grows up on the frontier has always been a problem. Correspondence courses provide a partial solution today, but before such benefits existed, the parents of children in out-of-the-way places had to resort to various expedients. One of these was to ship the children away to boarding school—sometimes for years—as was done in the old days of the fur trade, when parents sent their offspring overseas and kept them there until schooling was done. Or they might send them to school at Red River—as is still done by isolated fur traders.

As far back as 1808 there was a co-educational school at Albany Factory on James Bay, attended by 23 pupils between the ages of 5 and 16. Rev. John West started his school for Indian boys at Red River in 1820, and a dozen years later his successor, Rev. David Jones, opened there a school for sons of Company officers, while Mrs. Jones taught their daughters. At York Factory, James Hargrave's journal of October 21, 1840, recorded the opening of a night school conducted by William Anderson, the store porter. Pupils consisted of young Company apprentices, tradesmen's children, and "servants desirous of improving their education." Paper, pens, books, and candles were supplied free, but the hours were late for the ten children who attended—6 to 9 p.m. When the days began to lengthen in March, the school closed for the season, but not before "some of the Gentlemen of the Establishment" had examined the students and presented books to the prizewinners.

Behind the Scenes

When it was known that a whole issue of the *Beaver* was to be devoted to York Factory, the archives department of the Hudson's Bay Company in London was asked to prepare copious notes on the subject under the headings used in this number. This meant that a tremendous amount of original research in the voluminous YF records had to be done, then classified, and typed out in workable form for the *Beaver* and its contributors.

If the original records had been in plain, legible English, the task would have been formidable enough. But the researchers had to deal with the curious calligraphy of the 17th and 18th centuries, and the even more curious modes of expression of people like Captain James Knight, whose written "English" was truly wonderful and fearful (*q.v.*). In copying it, every capital letter had to be shown, every bit of misspelling faithfully reproduced. And of course this process was carried on into the contributor's study, the editor's office, and the printer's plant. How amazed the emphatic old captain would have been, if he had known of the loving care exercised upon his fantastic orthography to make sure that its mistakes were accurately perpetuated in print.

Perhaps the greatest single contribution of the Archives staff to this issue was the finding and tabulation of data on the old ships and their captains. One table, occupying 81 typed pages, lists the ships sailing to and from York Factory from 1670 to 1900, and gives the year of each voyage, the ship's name, the captain's name, and notes of interest on the voyage itself. Another, of 60 pages, contains 166 extensive notes numbered in reference to the first list, on the ships and the captains. And besides these, there are indices of the captains and ships for quick reference—the former listing 107 names and the latter 134.

All this detailed and careful work had to be done in addition to the regular work of the Archives staff, which includes research for accredited students of the fur trade, and the preparation of the annual volumes of the Hudson's Bay Record Society. To the archivist and her assistants, and to the many others who helped with pictures and information, goes the gratitude of the *Beaver*.

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